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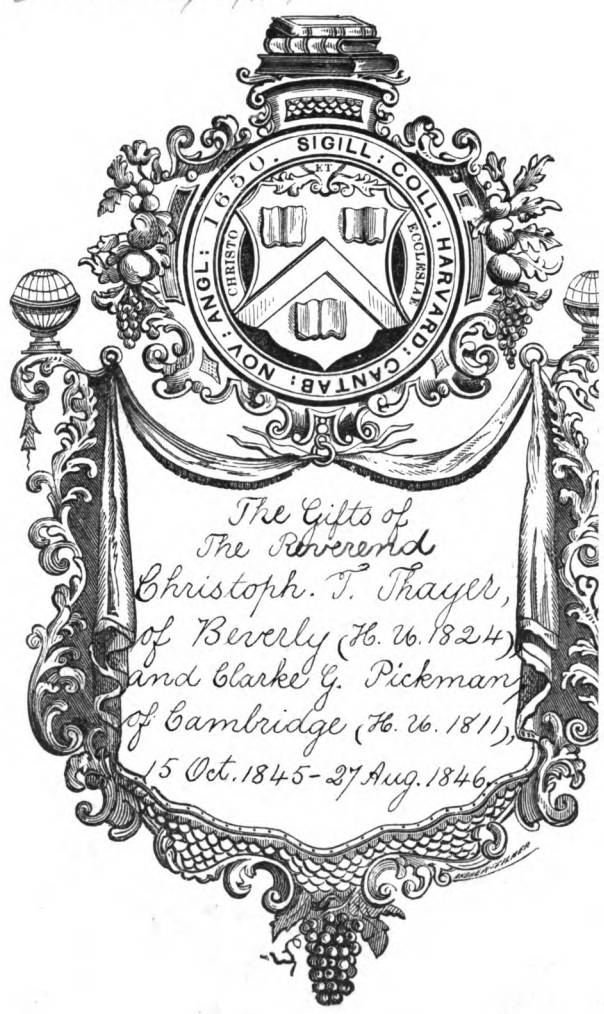
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Thayer, D.D., etc. Boston. 1833.

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Lancaster, Mass. - Congregational  
**RECORDS OF THE CHURCH**

IN THE CASE OF

DEACON JAMES G. CARTER;

AND

**A REPLY**

TO THE COMMUNICATION MADE BY HIM TO THE  
BRETHREN, ON THE DAY OF HIS REMOVAL  
FROM THE OFFICE OF DEACON,

*by Nathaniel Thayer.*

③

LANCASTER, MASS.:

PRINTED BY CARTER, ANDREWS, AND CO.

1832.

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Aug 27, 1845

Gift of Rev. B. T. W. Ligon,

of Lawrence (H. A. 1824.)

At a meeting of the Church of Christ in Lancaster, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1832, the following preamble and vote were adopted.

As it appears to this Church that our brother James G. Carter has caused to be printed the communication made by him on the day of his removal from the office of Deacon, in which, after a fortnight's deliberation, he refused to comply with the request of the brethren that he would resign his office; and as by this publication it is rendered our indispensable duty to efface, as far as possible, the unfair impressions it is calculated to make—

*Therefore, Voted,* That the reply of the Pastor to the communication of Deacon James G. Carter, both of which were directed to be placed on the files of the Church, with the design that no greater publicity should be given them, and in addition to this that the records of the church in relation to his case be also printed for the information and use of the members.

Attest,                      NATHL. THAYER, *Pastor.*

The two notes which form a part of this pamphlet are collected from what the Pastor believes to be authentic records and sources. He is solely responsible for their introduction. He gives them this publicity in the belief, that it will be a gratification to the brethren, and will be important in forming a judgment, to be placed in possession of all the facts which are connected with the chief grounds of the general and almost unprecedented excitement.





**RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS**  
**OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN LANCASTER,**  
**IN THE CASE OF**  
**DEACON JAMES G. CARTER.**

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At a meeting of the Church of Christ in Lancaster, June 1st, 1832, Prayer for light and a blessing was offered.

The Pastor, with a desire to stand justified in calling a meeting of the Church, narrated three interviews he had sought with Deacon James G. Carter, in reference to circumstances which were occasions of grief to many members of the Church. He also read a note from Deacon Carter, informing him of his purpose, "if in health and able," to officiate at the Lord's Table the next Sabbath. He farther stated, that desirous of treating Dea. Carter with all possible tenderness, and of having his own course and the proceedings of the Church candidly and impartially examined, he offered for consideration this proposition; viz: "That three Clergymen mutually chosen, or two Clergymen and a Layman, of our own denomination, be requested to give us their advice in answer to this question: Is it expedient in view of the civil action commenced by Deacon James G. Carter on account of a crime with which he was publicly accused, and in view also of the general dissatisfaction and grief of the members of this Church, that he resign his office as a Deacon of the Church?"

The following was also stated by the Pastor as the purpose for which this church-meeting was called ; viz : To ask advice and direction of the brethren, "whether in view of the present state of things in our relation to Dea. James G. Carter, and a knowledge of the feelings and opinions of many members of the Church, it is expedient and proper that he officiate at the approaching celebration of the Lord's Supper?" After considerable discussion, on motion, it was voted that this meeting be adjourned on condition that Dea. James G. Carter will abstain from his official duties on the next Lord's day.

Voted and chose Dea. Joel Wilder, brothers Moses Smith and Samuel Carter, a committee to confer with Dea. James G. Carter, and ascertain whether he will comply with the condition on which the preceding vote was passed, and report immediately. Their report was in the affirmative.

Whereupon, voted, that this meeting stand adjourned till Friday, the 29th inst. at 4 o'clock P. M., then to be holden at the meeting-house ; and that notice be given of this adjournment from the pulpit on the preceding Sabbath.

Attest,

NATHL. THAYER, *Pastor.*

June 29th, 1832.

The Church assembled agreeably to adjournment and united in Prayer.

The record of the proceedings of the last meeting being read, the Pastor requested the Church to take into consideration and decide on the advice he had given Dea. James G. Carter to resign his office as Deacon of the Church.

After some remarks, a motion was made and seconded that the Church express by a vote their desire that Dea. James G. Carter resign the office of Deacon.

A motion that when the vote should be called it be decided by Yeas and Nays passed in the negative.

Whereupon, *Voted*, (21 brethren voting in the affirmative,) That it is the desire of this Church that Dea. James G. Carter resign his office as Deacon.

✓ On being asked by the Pastor whether he was prepared to reply to this vote, he answered that he was not, but if indulged with a fortnight for consideration he would be in readiness.

It was then on motion, voted, that this meeting stand adjourned to receive the answer of Dea. Carter till this day fortnight, July 13, at 5 o'clock, P. M.; that it be holden at the meeting-house, and public notice be given as in the former instance.

Attest, NATHL. THAYER, *Pastor*.

July 13, 1832.

The Church assembled in pursuance of their vote of adjournment, and sought the direction and blessing of Heaven in Prayer.

Dea. James G. Carter, being requested, made a communication to the Church in reply to their vote at the preceding meeting, by which he was requested to resign his office as a Deacon of the Church. Near the conclusion he thus answered their request: "I shall not under the present circumstances of the case resign the office of Deacon in the Church."

After a miscellaneous discussion, the Pastor asked the indulgence of the brethren to a few remarks.\*

*Voted*, That the communication of Dea. James G. Carter and all the papers and records relating to the case be placed on file, to be at the disposal of the Church.

On motion, *Voted*, That Dea. James G. Carter be removed from his office as a Deacon of the Church.

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\* These remarks are embodied in the reply of the Pastor to the communication of Dea. James G. Carter.



N. B. At the time the above vote was passed a declaration was made that thirteen brethren had voted affirmatively. Facts which have since come to my knowledge prove that the hand of two brethren was not perceived by the Pastor, and that there were fifteen affirmative votes.

*Voted*, That this meeting be dissolved.

Attest,            NATHL. THAYER, *Pastor*.

July 22d, 1832.

The brethren being requested to tarry after Divine Service, the Pastor desired them to direct that a manuscript he was about to read, and which embodied the remarks verbally made by him on hearing the communication of Dea. James G. Carter at the church-meeting on July 13th, be placed on file with said communication, as a reply to it, and be at the disposal of the Church.

The manuscript being read, on motion, *Voted*, That it be placed on file as requested by the Pastor.

Attest,            NATHL. THAYER, *Pastor*.

A true copy from the records.

Attest,            NATHL. THAYER, *Pastor*.

## REPLY.

### BRETHREN OF THE CHURCH.

THE communication recently made by Deacon James G. Carter to this Church must have been perceived to be chiefly a personal accusation of our brother Ezra Sawyer and myself. As it is directed by a vote that that communication be placed on file, and as it will of course be subject to inspection at any future period, I request as a favor that this may accompany it. I consider it due to myself, to our brother who is also accused, to the Church, and to the cause and interest of religion.

In the discharge of his official duties, I am happy to admit, that Deacon Carter has been exemplary and faithful; and that in his superintendence and direction of our Sabbath School he has been judicious and highly useful. I have no cause to represent him as having done me any personal injury during his official course. On the contrary, I feel obliged to him for many tokens of kindness and respect.

From the time of his election as Deacon of the Church it was known and lamented by me, that this event was a cause of deep solicitude and grief to many respectable members. Of this I scrupulously and faithfully informed him long before his acceptance of the office. Knowing that there was a diversity of judgment in relation to his appointment, I considered it a matter of expediency and a duty, after communicating to him my knowledge of existing facts, to leave him to an independent decision. When

on the day preceding his first performance of the duty of an officer of the Church he called at my house to notify me of his acceptance of the office, I desired him to retain in remembrance the fact, that I had given him no advice, and that whatever might be the consequences resulting, I could take upon myself no part of the responsibility. I have ever thought that Deacon Carter's retaining the land and money he received as a consideration for the establishment of a literary institution in this town, and his course in reference to the Lancaster Reading Room, were the prominent causes of the uneasiness and excitement which have existed. These being now subject to judicial investigation and decision, it would ill become me or this Church to pronounce a sentence of acquittal or condemnation. I introduce these topics for the simple purpose of recording the evidence that I have not been negligent in administering counsel to him as a christian brother.

In the month of April, 1831, having attended with Dea. Carter the ordination of Rev. Mr. Gilbert, at Harvard, I embraced the opportunity, which I had long sought, to expostulate with him on the subject of retaining the money and land.\* I said to him, that were it my last cent, I

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\* In 1827, Mr. James G. Carter projected the plan of a literary institution in this town, whose principal object it should be to qualify Teachers for the instruction of common schools. Messrs. H. & G. Carter, in behalf of themselves and their brother, who was then absent, with other inhabitants, subscribed liberally for his encouragement. The Messrs. Carters contributed \$900 towards the accomplishment of the design; \$306 were paid by them in land which they conveyed to Mr. Carter. They paid in money a balance of \$94. They also gave him a note of hand for \$500. It is matter of notoriety that the institution to aid in which these sums were subscribed is not in existence. The land is retained and im-

would surrender it rather than keep in my possession property which had been thus acquired. In the month of July or August of the same year, having visited with him the school near the Alms House, I introduced and enlarged on the subject of his not returning the books he had taken from the Reading Room.\* I expressed my

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proved by him, and no restitution has been offered. For a proportion of the ~~book~~ which was paid a suit has been commenced, and is now pending. The note of hand for \$500 is still in his possession. *sum*

\* In 1821 an Association was formed, which assumed the name of the "Lancaster Reading Room." The original proprietors, of which number was Dea. James G. Carter, obliged themselves to pay each \$5,00 per year, and ten cents per day for each volume, when it had been kept from the Library more than ten days. At a subsequent period the term for many of the books was extended to three weeks. Each proprietor had the privilege of introducing a periodical work, for which he was to be allowed in the annual assessments. Dea. Carter furnished the Edinburgh Review, and in the account of the Association is credited for all his volumes \$12,50. He has paid in cash and by another work for which he has credit also, \$9,47, amounting in the whole which he has paid to \$21,97. His regular assessments during his residence in this town and use of the Library, according to the principle to which the other proprietors have conformed, amounted to \$37,53. He took from the Library and kept in possession for more than eighteen months a large number of valuable books. He was present at the meeting of the Association when a resolution was passed to sell the Library, and was present also at the vendue of the books. Of the books taken, and considered irregularly kept, he retains to this day ten volumes of "The Massachusetts Historical Collections," which at the original cost are in value \$19,33. His whole debt to the Association, including these volumes, is \$56,06. *C*



anxiety lest evil should result. The import of his reply after receiving my advice in both cases was, "I have practised condescension sufficiently long, and shall defend my own rights." The causes of excitement being suffered to remain, it can be no matter of surprise that there was a general burst of astonishment and indignation when at a late public vendue it was announced as a matter of notoriety that Dea. James G. Carter had been a plunderer of the Reading Room.

Collecting as was unavoidable from all quarters the general sentiment and feeling, I perceived that the crisis which I had long feared must come. If I know my own heart, it was my sincere desire and prayer that a course might be found the least painful and disgraceful to Deacon Carter, and which should least tend to interrupt the harmony of this Church. I therefore selected Deacon Joel Wilder and brother Ezra Sawyer, two brethren whom I knew he had respected and confided in as friends, to be associated with me in an interview with him. At a previous conversation, having contemplated and weighed all the circumstances of the case, and the generally excited state of the Church and Society, we had come to the conclusion, that it was our duty to advise him to resign his office as Deacon. I suggested to him the importance of taking some early measures to efface the impression made upon the public mind, but there is no reasonable ground for all which he has said of my urging and hurrying him to the adoption of these measures.

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If the sum be deducted for which he has credit there will still be due from him \$34,89. The dividend to which he will have a title when the above balance is paid will be \$5,59. If fines had been exacted of him agreeably to the original regulations, and as other proprietors have paid, it would have added to his debt nearly \$100.

The advice to resign the office of Deacon was given by all of us, and with a full conviction, which we have seen no cause to abandon, that this would have been the most eligible and prudent course. The advice however was so qualified as to prevent any possible injury in the prosecution about to be commenced, and as should not imply an acknowledgment of guilt. He was advised in his communication to the Church to state what he then affirmed, that he had a consciousness of rectitude, that he resigned out of tenderness and respect for his aggrieved brethren, and that he should embrace the earliest opportunity which presented for the vindication of his character. This advice, thus qualified, was I hope given with tenderness and a Christian spirit. It was grounded on information, upon which I could confidently rely, that the circumstance that Deacon Carter was an officer in the Church had been the means of deterring respectable and excellent individuals from offering themselves for admission to our communion; that it was matter of dissatisfaction and grief to a large proportion of the present members of the Church; and that his continuance in office alarmingly endangered the peace and prosperity of the Church and Society. For doing what I esteemed my imperious duty under these circumstances, I have received in return the communication which is placed on the files of the Church. The information was once and again repeated to Deacon Carter, that no formal complaint had been brought against him; that no catalogue of accusers could or would be furnished; that under existing circumstances there was no wish or intention to deprive him of the enjoyment of any privilege of a Christian brother; and for this obvious reason, that the chief causes of the present state of feeling in reference to him were about to be submitted to a civil tribunal, and that it would be improper for us in any way to interfere with their inquiries or decision.

I do most solemnly affirm, that the statement he has made, that I *first* gave an unqualified answer in the affirmative to his question, whether in case he should leave the Society I would give him a dismissal and recommendation to another Unitarian Society in the neighbourhood, has no foundation in truth. I think no one can give credit to this statement, who considers for one moment, that it was a question which must eventually be decided by the Church; that in the course of that conversation I had told him, that in taking and retaining the books he had done what in my opinion was *morally wrong*. At the same time also I was informed by him, that he was about to commence a civil action for the vindication of his character. All which it was proper for me to say or which I did say was, that I would submit the question, if desired, to the brethren, and that the present would be a very improper time to make the application.

The proposition to submit to three Clergymen or to two Clergymen and a Layman the question whether it was expedient for Deacon Carter to resign his office, was offered by me with a view to conciliate and to gratify some members of the Church. My personal desire was that if the Church could be in harmony they should of themselves accomplish the business.

I do not deem it to be necessary to add more particular remarks and explanations; but will observe, that nothing in my hearing has dropped from the lips of our brother Sawyer which was inconsistent with a friendly and Christian regard for the best interest and welfare of Deacon Carter, and for the peace and prosperity of the Church. I cannot but remark that some of the statements in his communication are incorrect, others highly coloured, and the whole calculated to make an unfair impression of the course which had been pursued. The farther my

knowledge of the feelings and desires of the members of this Church has extended, and the more particular my acquaintance is with the state and prospects of the Society, the more firmly I am established in the belief, that the resignation or removal of Deacon James G. Carter was an indispensable measure, and that had he complied with the advice first given him, it would have been most for his own good, and for the quiet and happiness of this Christian community.

NATHL. THAYER.

A true copy from the files of the Church.

Attest, NATHL. THAYER, *Pastor.*





2  
LETTER

TO THE

REV. NATHANIEL THAYER, D. D.

TOUCHING HIS CONDUCT IN CONNEXION WITH THE RECENT

PROCEEDINGS OF

THE CHURCH IN LANCASTER

UNDER HIS PASTORAL CARE;

AND UPON THE RIGHTS, DIGNITY, AND TENURE OF

THE OFFICE OF DEACON

IN A CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

Gordon  
BY JAMES G. CARTER.

✓ BOSTON:

J. E. HINCKLEY AND CO., PRINTERS, 14 WATER STREET.

.....  
1833.

1845, Oct. 15.  
Gift of  
C. G. Pickens,  
of Cambridge.  
(N. Y. 1811.)

## LETTER.

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To the Rev. NATHANIEL THAYER, D. D.

*Pastor of the Congregational Church in Lancaster :*

SIR,—I have for some time been compelled to regard the unfortunate controversy, purporting to be carried on for the last few months, between me and my brethren of the Church, over which you preside, as really and from the beginning between me and yourself. What are the grounds of this opinion, as well as for the belief, most sincerely entertained, that you and you alone are almost wholly responsible for the introduction of the difficulty into the Church, will, I trust, appear by most abundant evidence, in the subsequent pages of this letter. But the readiness with which your opinions seem to have been adopted by our brethren,—at least the promptitude, with which your wishes appear by your records to have been executed by the church,—and the ingenious and extraordinary manner in which your measures have been covered and sustained by majorities of those members of the church, who could be persuaded to take any part in the late proceedings against me, have hitherto prevented the controversy from assuming its true character.

The recent printing, however, of *your* records of the church, together with a statement of *your own*, termed by you a “reply” to a communication made by me to the church, and drawn from me to them by a vote of theirs requesting me to resign my office, the whole prefaced by an ample and argumentative preamble and vote, submitted to the church by *yourself*, enable me, with the strictest propriety, to address myself, without any apology, to you ; either in controverting the facts by you alleged,—in exposing the sophistry of your reasonings,—or in explanation of any of my motives and actions by you arraigned.

Happy indeed should I be, if when I have addressed this letter to you my duties were also well done to myself,—to the church of which we are brethren,—to our sister churches,—and to the

cause of christian truth and liberty. But it is not so, and I regret—most sincerely and unfeignedly regret—that it is not so. Circumstances, however, in which I have had no agency, and over which I could exercise no control, seem otherwise to have ordered. And it becomes my sacred and indispensable duty, from which no considerations of delicacy or of a personal nature will allow me to shrink, to adapt both the kind and degree of my measures of defence to the circumstances, in which, chiefly by your agency, I have been placed.

The attitude you have voluntarily assumed in the controversy, by appending to the "Records and Files of the Church," printed by a vote of the church and for the "use of the members," notes of your own, certainly calculated, if not designed, deeply to affect my honor and my christian character, would leave no shadow of doubt in my mind, even if any existed before, and can leave no doubt on the minds of our brethren, what are now your personal feelings towards me, notwithstanding your repeated and solemn assertions of tenderness and regard. The extensive circulation in the community, you have given to the pamphlet thus compiled upon your "sole responsibility," not only without any authority or permission of the church but against the very letter of its vote, has forced the consideration of the subject upon them; and obliged the public at large, as well as your brethren of the church, to judge of the purity of the motives and the consistency of the principles, which have governed your course in the recent proceedings against me. So judicious and timely, for your purposes, was the compilation and distribution of your pamphlet through the community, that even a judge of the court, before which the civil actions therein named were then pending, was served with a copy,—purporting, as it did, to contain statements of facts sanctioned with the great authority of your name, touching two cases, which he might and probably would, soon, be called upon officially to adjudicate. Thus either by your own direct agency, or by your means, was a flagrant and scandalous attempt made to poison the very sources of justice!

Having thus distinctly and unequivocally appealed to the public, you have compelled me, by a necessity, which I can neither resist nor evade, to follow you, and to appear with you before that august tribunal, in whose presence both you and I may well feel awe, when we come to discuss questions such as are presented by your pamphlet. But as you have deliberately chosen your own tribunal, you cannot, hereafter, take exception to the jurisdiction of the court before whom issue is joined upon your own appeal. It is not without a deep and oppressive sense of the fearful odds against me, that I enter upon the attempt to controvert facts by you publicly and officially stated.

I am well aware, and you seem perfectly to understand and greatly to rely upon the circumstance, that on questions of fact at issue between us, where neither is sustained by other evidence, your age, your profession, and the strong desire pervading the community to sustain the purity and honor of your profession, all conspire to raise a presumption in your favor. And the more am I astonished and grieved, that you should have found it in your heart, to array the whole weight of your talents, your venerable years, and your professional reputation, against one comparatively so humble, so inexperienced in controversy, and so inoffensive, by your own admission, against you. But I am cheered and encouraged to the discharge of my disagreeable, though I believe indispensable duty in this behalf, by the unchangable nature of truth and the impregnable justice of my cause. I have also the consoling reflection, that on all material points of the controversy I am sustained by an accumulation of positive and circumstantial evidence, more than sufficient to overthrow any presumption you have raised or can hope to raise in your favor.

These few preliminary remarks will, I trust, sufficiently explain the motives, with which I address you; as well as the necessity under which I act, in making my communication to you public. I propose now to remind you of some of the facts in the history of my relation to you as pastor of our church; and then to refresh your recollection with a pretty full account of the commencement and course of my official relation to you and my brethren of the church. For you seem recently to have forgotten, or at least to presume that others have forgotten, some very material parts of this history; unless you are prepared at once to admit, that you have abandoned all pretensions to consistency in your official conduct, and in the principles, by which you are governed in your treatment of your christian brethren.

I became a resident in Lancaster, and personally acquainted with you as a clergyman soon after I left the University in the Autumn of 1820. And since that time, with the exception of a temporary residence in Boston of about two years, I have been your parishioner, and constantly attended your public instructions. In the Spring of 1822, in conformity with my convictions of duty in that regard, I made a public profession of religion and connected myself with the church, under your pastoral care. Soon after, I was appointed by my brethren, a delegate to represent with you our church in a council to be convened in Burlington, Vt. for the ordination of Rev. Mr. Ingersoll. Circumstances, however, compelled me to decline an attendance of the council, against your strong personal solicitations. From the winter of 1826-7, to the Spring of 1830, when I was elected to be a deacon of the church, my

character and conduct, under circumstances of peculiar perplexity and trial, which will by and by be more particularly alluded to, was brought minutely under the inspection of our brethren, and especially under your own personal inspection. And notwithstanding the severe ordeal, to which I had been exposed for four years, by the open, vociferous, and consistent, though I must add for the sake of truth, persevering, and uncompromising hostility of some members of the parish, who have exercised an influence upon its concerns as well as those of the church, not at all due to their talents, education or moral worth; and notwithstanding the severer ordeal, to which I had been exposed, by the treachery of other members of the parish, who derived their chief power to injure me from their false and unprincipled professions of friendship, my election to the office of deacon, under circumstances of remarkable deliberation, was almost unanimous,—more unanimous, as you at the time informed me, than any other election to the same office except one, which had occurred since your ordination, and that, too, by a much larger vote than has ever since been given, even on an incidental question, during the late proceedings against me.

I have said that my election to the office of deacon was made under circumstances of "remarkable deliberation;" and it seems necessary to remind you of what those circumstances were. The office of a deacon having become vacant in our church by the resignation of my immediate predecessor, the subject of filling the vacancy was brought officially before the brethren April 4, 1830. To give time for deliberation, the choice was postponed, and particularly assigned for April 8, immediately after the exercises of the Annual Fast. After the vacancy was known to exist, and particularly after the time was appointed for filling it; it was mentioned to me by several of my brethren, that I had been named as a candidate. I uniformly expressed my reluctance to being even named as a candidate; and to some I gave as one reason for it, that it would exasperate my enemies out of the church. Notwithstanding the repeated expressions of my personal feelings in regard to the office, when the church assembled, April 8, I observed several ballots bearing my name, as the members were taking their places previous to the organization of the meeting. The meeting being organized and the ballots being called for, I rose in my place, before any were deposited, and publicly declined being a candidate. I did then profess a reverence for the sacredness of the office and a deep sense of the solemn responsibility its acceptance would involve; and having thus distinctly withdrawn myself from notice as a candidate, I respectfully requested those brethren, who had designed to honor me with

their votes, to unite in the choice of some other brother ; that whoever was chosen, might enter upon the duties of the office, with the encouraging reflection that he had the unanimous voice of the church.

I supposed that the election would forthwith proceed ; but after a few moments delay and consultation, it was moved by the senior Deacon, that as the brethren did not appear to be ready to act, in consequence of brother Carter's withdrawing himself as a candidate, the church should adjourn till the next Sunday week, April 18th. The motion prevailed, no one opposing it, and the church was accordingly adjourned. I do not now recollect that the subject was mentioned to me again by any one till the day of election. As I was entering church in the afternoon of April 18th, a brother spoke to me and said, there was still a strong desire among the brethren, that I should be elected, and he hoped I would say no more, but let the vote be taken. The vote was taken, and declared by you to be almost unanimous. You subsequently informed me, in conversation upon the subject, if I recollect rightly, that of thirty-two votes but two were against me. And as a reason why I ought, under the circumstances, to accept the office, you also informed me, that one of the ballots cast against me, was by mistake ; the brother having prepared his ballot at home, without consultation with any one, and upon the supposition that my name was entirely out of the question.

I was much astonished, and I need not add gratified, at the result of this vote. For I had not supposed it possible, that any thing like such cautious and deliberate unanimity could be obtained in electing me to such an office, after the severe and passion-stirring difficulties, through which I had then but recently passed with portions of my fellow citizens of the town. Especially was I astonished and gratified, by this unequivocal and spontaneous token of confidence and regard ; after my motives had been so often impeached, and my character so wantonly assailed by all manner of abuse ; from the sly insinuations of the adepts at slander, down to the vulgar and profane abuse of the tap-room brawlers. I was willing to receive, and I did receive this circumstance as evidence of what I had always believed to be true as a principle ;—that truth, even-handed, was more than a match for falsehood ; and that integrity and consistency of conduct would in the end always prevail over error and misrepresentation ; however ingeniously contrived, and by whomsoever concerted and propagated. My election to such an office, at such a time, and under such circumstances seemed to assure me of the deliberate and steadfast confidence of a large number of my neighbors and fellow-citizens, who had enjoyed the best means of knowing the purity of



my motives, the correctness of my principles, and the consistency of my character. Being forcibly and gratefully impressed by this unexpected and affecting incident of my life, I hesitated a moment, after you had announced to the church the result of their ballot, whether, in accordance with my personal feelings, I should rise and peremptorily decline the office, or whether the almost unexampled unanimity of the brethren did not impose it as a duty upon me to take the subject into respectful consideration. You relieved the embarrassment of the moment by observing, that it was customary to allow time to deliberate upon the subject; and thus you obliged me not peremptorily and on the spot again to decline. For I could not, without obvious impropriety and indecorum, refuse to *consider* a subject, which had thus been repeatedly and so respectfully and solemnly presented to my consideration.

After the adjournment of the meeting, the hope was earnestly expressed to me by several respectable and influential members of the church, that I should not disappoint what seemed to be the almost unanimous wish of my brethren, by refusing the office to which I had been elected. And I was informed by more than one brother, and by those too, who were supposed to know most intimately your personal views and feelings upon the subject, that my election was a circumstance particularly acceptable to yourself. I availed myself of an early opportunity, and, indeed, of repeated opportunities to converse with you upon the subject. At one interview, soon after the election, I laid open to you my feelings upon the subject most unreservedly. I declared my fixed determination not to accept the office, if by so doing, I was to give offence or unpleasant feelings to any single brother of the church. And I particularly enquired of you, what were the feelings of Deacon Lane and Major Locke towards me, and especially towards me in the relation of an officer of the church. For I supposed these brethren would have objections to my acceptance of such an office, if objections were felt in any quarter. You cannot, I think, have forgotten the conversation I had with you, at this time, in regard to Deacon Lane,—the tone of earnestness, with which I enquired of you concerning his feelings upon the subject, and the decided terms, in which I assured you, that I never should think of entering upon the duties of the office, to which I had been elected; if by so doing, I was to incur his displeasure, or even if I was to render the discharge of his own duties less agreeable to him. You assured me in regard to both the brethren above named, that, although they had formerly entertained prejudices against me, growing out of my controversy with them and others, proprietors of the Academy building, they were willing to forgive and forget all causes of former difference, that they

had acquiesced in what seemed to be the wishes of the brethren, and that I had nothing to apprehend from either of them. I think you also assured me that your information was derived from personal interviews with them upon the subject, but of this I cannot now speak positively. I received the same assurances in regard to these two individuals from another brother, who had been at particular pains to ascertain their feelings towards me. I do not recollect that I enquired of you, at this interview, what was your own opinion of the course duty pointed out to me; but the promptitude, with which you obviated every objection I raised to the acceptance of the office, and your voluntarily informing me, that there never had been but one so unanimous a choice since your ordination, together with the hopes expressed by those near you, and who must have reflected your opinions, left no doubt upon my mind what were then your personal wishes. Nor had I any intimation from you, direct or indirect at this or any subsequent interview, while the question of accepting the office was pending in my mind, that my election was a cause of regret or uneasiness to a single member of the church. If I had received such an intimation then, you well know, I should have acted upon the principle I had avowed, and declined the office at once.

These facts in regard to my election to the office of Deacon in the church, over which you preside, and in regard to my deliberations upon the question of accepting the office, I know to be substantially, and believe them to be minutely true. Substantially they are susceptible of even legal proof; and the only reasons such proof is not now adduced, are, my reluctance to bring individuals unnecessarily before the public in this painful controversy, and my belief that you will now admit the above statements to be true. If my belief and hope in this respect are disappointed, and you require the sacrifice, I shall esteem it my right and indispensable duty, disregarding personal feelings, to arrange the documents for public inspection, duly authenticated to sustain my positions. But undoubted as my facts are and must be now even by yourself, they must wholly have escaped your recollection, when you wrote the following sentences in your "Reply" to the communication I made to the church July 13.

"From the time of his election as Deacon of the Church it was known and lamented by me, that this event was a cause of deep solicitude and grief to many respectable members. Of this I scrupulously and faithfully informed him *long* before his acceptance of the office."

Without a word of comment, I leave you, what I think must prove the unwelcome task, of either controverting my facts, or of reconciling the irresistible inference from them, with what you have alleged in a formal communication, officially made to

the church, under your own signature. I shall not attempt to express my astonishment, nor the astonishment of those brethren of the church, who were acquainted with the circumstances above detailed, and the course you took at the time alluded to, that you should now venture upon such a statement, upon a matter so important and in a manner so public and solemn. In the exercise of that charity, which I think I have not always experienced at your hands, I have endeavoured by consultation of my records and minutes of the events, as well as by patient and careful reflection, to ascertain what were the probable facts or circumstances, on which you rely for your assertion. But I have not been able to find or conceive of any. The only shadow of ground for the statement, that I can now bring to mind, implies an equivocation of language, which I can hardly persuade myself you would resort to, for a much higher object than that of justifying yourself, for advice privately and hastily given to me, or even as an apology for the awkward attitude into which you had led our brethren of the church. If you now say that you mean by the term "members," in the above paragraph quoted from your "Reply," members of the town or of the parish, though this is obviously not the meaning you conveyed or intended to convey to your readers, there is an appearance or a shadow of truth in it.

It is true that during the week, on which my answer was to be given as to accepting the office, and, I think, but three days before the determination must be made, you called at my house ; and in a conversation upon the subject, you informed me that Mr. Ferdinand Andrews had said, either to you, for you had had a conversation with him touching the matter, or to your knowledge "That if I was to be a deacon of the church, he should join the Bolton Society!" You, also, at the same interview, informed me, "that Mr. Davis Whitman was very angry at my election, and you did not know what they would do. You were afraid they would make difficulty." I considered these pieces of information as intimations that you had then become alarmed, and was afraid to have me accept the office ; not because of dissatisfaction among the members of the church, for they had expressed their wishes in a manner too unequivocal to be questioned, but on account of the hostility of the men above named. I supposed you feared that one might fulfil his threat and join another society, and the other might use his influence to organize a new society of a different persuasion within the bounds of your parish. However such motives might influence your own conduct, I considered them altogether improper to be addressed to me, at that late period, after the previous course you had taken in regard to my election. And I fear I but imperfectly suppressed the natural and spontaneous feelings of my heart upon the subject.

I told you, then, that I was still in the hands of my brethren—of those brethren who had brought me forward for the office;—if they should *now* advise me not to accept it, I should conform to their advice. Though I should think it rather strange treatment, and worse than any I had yet received, if they should at this time, and from such motives, undertake to withdraw me, after setting me up, as they had, and exposing me anew to the malignant shafts of my enemies. I immediately informed one of my brethren, and I believe more than one, of my conversation with you. I apprised him of your fearful apprehensions from the threat of one of the above-named persons, and the anger of the other; and told him I should conform to the advice of my friends as to accepting the office. I requested him to ascertain what were the feelings of my brethren and let me know seasonably what were their wishes. He called the day before my determination must be made known to you, and said he should wish me to accept, by all means, and that was the wish of my other brethren. He added “we have come to a pretty pass, indeed, if those gentlemen are going to control Church as well as State.” This was the true state of the question when I called upon you Saturday evening to inform you that I should accept the office to which I had been elected.

At that interview, and after I had made known to you the object of my call, you said, considering your relation to the church, it would be improper, and you had always made it a principle, not to interfere in the election to offices in the church; and you should, in my case, adhere to your rule and give no advice one way or the other. Your advice had before and repeatedly been given as unequivocally as was possible, consistently with your known delicacy in having your influence felt in the proceedings of the church; and that advice had been altogether in favor of my acceptance of the office. The only hesitancy you had ever manifested upon the subject was in the conversation above alluded to, when you expressed your fears from *people out of the church*. I was not disposed, sustained as I was by the almost unanimous voice of the church, nor were the members of the church disposed, at that time, to pay much deference to the impertinent interference of people not of our body, in what we thought was a matter chiefly of our own concern. Besides, it was too late to seek or to give advice. I had already signified my acceptance of the office. The above is the substance of all you said in regard to the office at this interview. At least it is all that I recollect, and I think I should recollect it, if you had said anything like the following in your Reply, “that whatever might be the consequences resulting;” from my acceptance of the office, “I could take upon myself no part of the responsibility.” Besides, it is in-

trinsically improbable, you could have given me, at that time, any such solemn warning of consequences ; because it is wholly inconsistent with your previous course in regard to the matter, —it is inconsistent with your avowed principle of not interfering in the elections—and it is wholly inconsistent with your subsequent declarations to members of the church and neighboring clergymen, who were, and I trust continue to be, our mutual friends. Thus, the *many respectable members of the church*, who you “knew and lamented” from the time of my election to the office of deacon, were deeply solicitous and grieved at the event, turn out to be *two members of the society*, and not of the church! and the “long” period before the acceptance of the office, at which you “scrupulously and faithfully” informed me that two members of the *society* were angry at my election, turns out to be three days! For up to that time you had manifested a strong interest in my election, and gratification at its result ; and neither then nor at any subsequent time did you solemnly warn me of any consequences, except that one member of the society threatened to go to Bolton to meeting, and another was very much enraged.

I accepted the office of deacon, and your worst fears, so far as I was informed, were realized. Mr. Andrews went to Bolton to meeting! the church in Lancaster, however, sustained the shock, and seemed to enjoy peace and a good degree of prosperity. It was under such circumstances that I entered upon the discharge of my official duties June 6, 1830, with your full concurrence and approbation, as I supposed then, and believe now, saving always the trifling exceptions above stated.

After I was elected to the office of deacon and before I entered upon the duties of the office, you made personal application to me to take an active part in organizing a Sabbath School then for the first time about to be opened in your parish. I attended the first meeting of the teachers agreeably to your request, and was appointed by them chairman of the Superintending Committee. If you “knew and lamented” at this time that my promotion in the church “was a cause of deep solicitude and grief to many respectable members” of the church or parish, you certainly might have avoided contributing so directly as you did to my promotion in the Sabbath School. You must have known that if the people of your church or parish were so solicitous and grieved at the prospect of my taking a comparatively silent and harmless though dignified and honorable office in the church, they would, for a stronger reason, be much more so, if I were to assume the moral and religious instruction of their children. But I pass over this circumstance with the single remark ; that your whole deportment towards me in regard to the Sabbath School at that time, is

wholly inconsistent and irreconcilable with your knowing at the same time, that "*many* respectable members" were deeply solicitous and grieved on my account ; much more is it irreconcilable with your having "*scrupulously and faithfully*" made known to me such pervading anxiety and discontent as you now pretend.

I entered upon the discharge of my duties in the organization, government, and instruction of the Sabbath School with a zeal and perseverance somewhat proportioned to my estimate of the importance of the object. And without intending to appropriate to myself any portion of the merit, it may be safely said, the school was eminently successful. As the season approached for opening the school the following year, you personally requested me to take the same part I had taken the year preceding. Considering it a matter in which the teachers in the school had an interest as well as yourself, I declined to organize the school anew without a new expression of their wishes to that effect. I informed you and my associates of the committee, that as my duties had been somewhat arduous the year preceding, I was desirous of yielding my place ; though I should be happy to take charge of any class that might be assigned to me. I did not wish to abandon the school ; I only desired to be relieved of the peculiar responsibilities I had been invested with the preceding year. I was informed by one of my associates that he feared the school would go down if I yielded my place, and by the other that he should consent to be of the committee only upon condition, that I should continue to be its chairman. The teachers assembled, confirmed your and my associates wishes ; and I did what I could through the following season, to meet your expectations and answer the hopes of the friends of the Sabbath School.

If you had known, even at that time, any thing in my character or conduct or in the "*solicitude and grief of many respectable members,*" which was alarming to the peace of your church or society, you certainly might have avoided making yourself conspicuous in soliciting my continued co-operation in the Sabbath School. But on the contrary you always expressed the highest gratification and satisfaction at the course I pursued. And I had not the least suspicion, at that time, that solicitude and grief were preying upon the minds of our church and society on my account, nor that you knew and lamented the fact. Even so late as the communication of your "*Reply*" to the church, you say,

"In the discharge of his official duties I am happy to admit, that Deacon Carter has been exemplary and faithful ; and in his superintendence and direction of our Sabbath School he has, *so far as my knowledge extends,* been judicious and highly useful."

I have cited this passage from your "Reply," as communicated to the church, a certified copy of which I have,—not wholly for the sake of preserving your certificate of my good conduct and valuable services ; but for the opportunity it gives of offering a remark upon the different version of it you have made in the printed copy, also certified as a "true copy from the files." The clause in italics is wholly omitted in the printed copy. The cautious and prudent reservation thereby expressed would do very well for the church ; but it was not in sufficiently good keeping with your unqualified approbation of my course so often expressed to neighbouring clergymen, our mutual friends, to have it appear in a copy designed for their and the public inspection. Though there does not appear to be any authority vested in you, either by virtue of your office as recording officer of the church, or by virtue of any vote of the church, to alter their records and files ; yet I think, those who have heard your expressions of approbation of my course previous to the commencement of the present difficulties must commend the alteration at least as a matter of taste. I certainly have no cause of complaint ; for the omission of the clause in italic is an exercise of magnanimity altogether in my favour.

Soon after I entered upon my duties as an officer in the church, it was the request of my brethren in office, manifested by my senior brother, that I should take the charge of the vessels and furniture for the communion table. The vessels and furniture were accordingly and by the direction of the deacons delivered to my care by the sexton. It was the invariable custom of the sexton to call at my house seasonably in the morning of the days of the celebration of the Lord's Supper, bringing the bread designed for use, that I might prepare it for the table. After preparing it, I delivered it with the furniture of the table to him, the deacons having engaged him to spread the table, it being inconvenient for them personally to attend to that part of their duty. On the close of the day, the furniture and vessels were uniformly returned to my care. I have mentioned these facts, not for their intrinsic and insulated importance, but because they occurred here in the order of time, and for the bearing they have on a subsequent transaction, which will by and by be more particularly alluded to.

At the period of the above transactions, all of a public and notorious character, I had been personally acquainted with you as a parishioner and townsman nearly ten years ; and had been a member of your church about eight years. We had always been on friendly terms, and for the last two or three years our intercourse had approached to intimacy. During my then recent difficulties with the trustees and proprietors of the Lancaster Academy, you had manifested a deep interest and sym-

pathy; and had expressed to my friends your unqualified approbation of my course. You even went so far as publicly to refuse to sign a certain petition to the trustees, though it was a paper rather popular at the time because it contained aspersions upon my character, and "assigned as reasons for your refusal, that you wholly disapproved of the course pursued against me." And to attest more strongly and decidedly your feelings upon the subject you publicly declined your seat at the board of trustees; assuring my friends that "you had watched my proceedings with uncommon attention and interest during the whole course of my difficulties with my enemies in Lancaster, and had not observed a single thing you thought wrong—you thought I had, under the most trying circumstances, behaved with great discretion and prudence."

I have mentioned these facts for the sake of showing the grounds I had for believing, when I entered upon my duties as a deacon in your church, and when, upon your personal and repeated solicitations, I assumed the "Superintendence" of the Sabbath School, that I enjoyed at least your confidence and respect. I know that I am perfectly accurate in my facts just cited, because I take them from memoranda upon the topics made at the time. If you inquire why I should have made memoranda of such facts at that time, my answer is ready and obvious. I was involved in perplexing difficulties with the trustees and proprietors of the Academy building, and questions of great importance to me were in agitation between us. I knew not what use I might have, before the difficulties terminated, for facts and opinions expressed by the prominent actors, and I took pains to make and preserve accurate records of them. Though those difficulties subsided, by my waving important rights for the sake of peace, some of the facts of the case I find have not lost their value.

From the Spring of 1830, down to the commencement of the present controversy, on the 21st March 1832, my relation to you and the church, and my relation to the Sabbath School, as well as my being of the school committee of the town and my having been repeatedly appointed a delegate of the church to attend with you ordaining councils, necessarily brought me into official as well as personal intimacy with you. I never suspected, during the whole time while I was endeavouring to do my official duties fully and cheerfully, that there was any secret and lurking misgivings in regard to me in your breast. On the contrary, I supposed your apparently cordial treatment of me and co-operation with me in promoting the best interests of the church and society, were, as they purported to be, sincere. I now believe they were so. And for this belief, I have not merely my impressions at the time, in which, however, I could



hardly be mistaken ; but your repeated declarations to our mutual friends both in and out of the town. Even since you moved the church and by your personal influence induced them to remove me from office, you have declared to a mutual friend of ours in a neighboring State that your "whole object was to *secure the greatest amount of peace,*—you considered circumstances as having taken a most unfortunate turn,—and you deeply lamented the separation from one whom you had *valued highly and confided in unreservedly.*"

I cannot be mistaken in the bearing of this plenary and consistent evidence of your words and actions, extending as it does through several years of our lives, and all going to show the sincerity of your professions of "unreserved confidence." The more am I astonished that you should now, even for so good an object as "securing the greatest amount of peace," be willing to avow "lamentations" and distrusts "*long*" entertained in regard to me. You cannot allow such a suspicion to be raised with regard to you, if it is within your power to prevent it, without convicting yourself of the deepest duplicity. I am not unmindful of the two conversations to which you have alluded in your "Reply," for the "purpose of recording the evidence that you have not been negligent in administering council to me as a christian brother." But neither of these conversations, though I recollect them perfectly, left any suspicion upon my mind that you were "administering council to me as a christian brother," if you mean by that phrase, that you were doing anything more than advising me, as friends often have occasion to advise each other, how to shape my course as a "matter of policy" to attain a common object. On the contrary, I was convinced by these conversations, and particularly by the one at the Harvard Ordination, that you were deeply interested in my personal promotion. For it seemed to me you were departing from a rule you had always avowed, and were actually taking part with me in a political election.

Lest I should possibly do you some injustice by referring to and commenting upon our conversation at the Harvard Ordination, I quote from your pamphlet the following sentences, which are all that were contained in your "Reply" as communicated to the church; and much more than all you said verbally to the church, the substance of which you profess to have embodied in your formal and written "Reply."

"In the month of April, 1831, having attended with Deacon Carter the ordination of Rev. Mr. Gilbert, at Harvard, I embraced the opportunity, *which I had long sought*, to expostulate with him on the subject of retaining the money and land. I said to him, that were it my last cent, I would surrender it rather than keep in my possession property, which had been thus acquired."

If my own memory is not unusually treacherous in this case, you have remembered some things in this conversation, which never happened; and you have certainly forgotten or omitted to mention several things which were said, and which you must know are very important to the issue. Even if every word you have remembered in the above sentences were strictly and literally true; you have done me as much injustice, and yourself as great a moral wrong, by suppressing material facts of the case, if you remember them, as if you had published what you knew was not true. You have, perhaps, a doubtful right, since it has become convenient to your present purposes, to call that conversation an "expostulation," or the "administering of counsel to a christian brother," and nobody can now say that you had not "*long sought the opportunity*" to make the "expostulation" or "administer the counsel." But *I* do not call the conversation alluded to any such thing as an "expostulation" or "counsel to a christian brother," if you mean by those phrases anything more than the common advice, which friends have frequent occasion to give and receive, as matters of policy, in the attainment of a common object. I shall state *the whole* of the conversation, which I can remember, and which I know to be true; and our readers will judge whether you have now given it its proper appellation and character. I trust our readers will appreciate this difference in our respective modes of conducting the controversy. You, more than a year after the conversation, and when it had become very convenient, if not essential to your present position to me and the church, to find or make something of the kind in the history of our acquaintance, say that at a certain time you expostulated with and administered counsel to me as a christian brother; and that you had long sought the opportunity to do it. I state the whole conversation, as it actually took place, together with the circumstances attending it; and without attempting to give it any specific or *technical name*, leave our readers to form their own opinion of its true character. As for your having *long sought* the opportunity for expostulation with me as an offending christian, for this is the sense you now wish to put upon the interview, I, certainly, cannot prove that you had not long sought it. Your assertion relates to a state or act of your own mind, and you well know that the case, from its very nature, does not admit of any positive evidence to show that the state of your mind at a certain time, was different from what you allege. But this, I can and will say; *I do not believe a word of it.* And I repel the insinuation you must have intended to convey, that I had become so shy and wary an offender, that even with the independence and boldness in rebuking sin you would fain have us believe attaches to your clerical character,

you could not, *long seeking it*, before have found access to me. I had been a member of your church, and *you had known all the facts of the case* relating to the "land and money" for four years. For the whole time I had been on friendly terms with you, and for the greater part of it, I had, by my official relations to you, been, necessarily, brought into direct and intimate contact with you. In the discharge of our official duties and in consulting for common objects pertaining to the interests of the church, the parish, or the town, we had frequent interviews, monthly, weekly, and sometimes almost daily, at my study, at your study, in the house, and by the way; and it is absolutely impossible to believe, that you could not have found an opportunity in all this time, if you greatly desired it, to unburden your conscience and warn me of my dangerous situation. So far from it, I never in the whole time even suspected your affliction for a moment; and did not at last, when you came to relieve yourself of the burden, *long* sustained, understand your "expostulation" at all as a christian admonition, which is the sense it has now become convenient to you to put upon it.

The conversation, alluded to in the paragraph above quoted from your pamphlet, and the circumstances preceding and attending it, were substantially as follow. On the 13th April, 1831, I attended the ordination of Mr. Gilbert of Harvard as a delegate from the church of Lancaster. I rode over towards your house with my horse and chaise on the morning of the ordination to take you in, it having been previously arranged that you should ride with me. I met you a little way this side of your house in readiness to go, but engaged very earnestly in conversation with Capt. Howe of Boylston. I knew there was a suit then pending between Capt. Howe and Rev. Mr. Russell then of Boylston, in which you were a principal witness. And my curiosity was of course a little excited. I heard very little of your conversation while I was waiting for you, but I heard you advise Capt. Howe very strongly to call Rev. Mr. Allen of Northborough as a witness in the case. I thought there seemed to be some hesitation in Capt. Howe whether to call Mr. Allen or not, but you insisted upon it that he would be a material witness in some point touching the case. We were in a hurry, and you soon stepped into my chaise and took leave of Capt. Howe. I mention these facts to show you that I remember other particulars of the events of that day as well as those of a more direct bearing upon the present controversy, and to give you an opportunity to impeach my statement and the accuracy of my memory if you can, by your friend Capt. Howe. We rode to Harvard together and attended to the business of the ordination. On our return you introduced the subject of the then approaching election of Representatives to the General Court.

You informed me that I was a candidate, and gave me to understand that you were deeply interested in having me elected, though you said you had always made it a rule not to interfere in that election, as all the candidates were generally your parishioners. You assigned as a reason for not taking a more open and active part in the election, that as all the candidates were your parishioners it would not do for the minister to interfere in the election. You informed me that the principal argument made use of by my opponents to defeat my election, was, that I held a note against Horatio Carter for \$500, which he had requested that I should give up, because it was given to me in the transactions about the "Academy Concern." You said that if you were in my place you would give it up, if it were your last cent, and thus take away all ground of complaint and objection to me. You said some of my friends wished it. They could get along very well if it were not for that. But you did not tell me who they were, who wished it, or that they or you wished it for any purpose, except to take from my opponents all ground of objection to me as a representative. I told you that I thought Horatio Carter had no right to call for such a note, or complain if I held it. Having voluntarily given it, it would be time for him to complain, when he was forced to pay it, and I did not intend *then* to enforce the payment by a suit. I told you that as to appeasing my enemies in town, it was entirely out of the question. They were perfectly inveterate, and would always find some cause or make one to find fault with me. That I had practiced *concession* to them long enough, and should now stand upon my rights.

You fully agreed with me at this time, as you had often said to me before, that my enemies were perfectly inveterate and unreasonable in their hostility. I told you in the course of the conversation that Horatio Carter had said that "they," meaning H. and G. Carter, "were perfectly satisfied with all they had done for me; for my coming into town had already enhanced the value of their real estate more than the sum they had subscribed." You replied, "that was very important information, and asked if you might repeat it from me." I told you, you might. You said you should name it to my friends, and thought it would do good. Nothing more of importance was said upon the subject. I am perfectly confident that no intimation fell from your lips, at that interview, that you thought there was any thing wrong on my part in holding said note against Horatio Carter. The only reason you assigned for yielding it up, was that it would stop the mouths of my inveterate enemies and promote my election to the General Court. I have narrated this interview and the circumstances attending it with substantial accuracy. In many cases I have given the very language

used at the time. How such a conversation held under such circumstances could have been wrought into an "expostulation" or "counsel to a christian brother," I am wholly at a loss to conceive. Nothing, it seems to me, but the absolute necessity in your case for something of the kind to sustain your present position and that of your church to me, could have so wrought upon your imagination, as to make you willing to call such a conversation under such circumstances by such inappropriate names. The whole impression left upon my mind was, that you were very desirous I should be elected a representative, and as a means of promoting that object, you suggested the course you did.

The other topic introduced into your "Reply" for "the simple purpose" as you say "of recording the evidence that you have not been negligent in administering counsel to me as a christian brother," and the interview upon which you rely as affording the necessary evidence of your own fidelity, is thus described by you.

"In the month of August of the same year, (1831) having visited with him the school near the Alms House, I introduced and enlarged on the subject of his returning the books he had taken from the Reading Room. I expressed my anxiety lest evil should result."

The general remarks I have just offered upon our conversation at the Harvard Ordination, are equally pertinent to the conversation had between us at the examination of the Alms-House school, and need not be here repeated. I shall pursue the same course in relation to the conversation just above described by you, if description it may be called, that I adopted in regard to the other. I shall state the whole conversation as it actually occurred, and leave our readers to judge, for I think they will be abundantly competent to judge, how well the introduction of this topic answers the purpose, for which you *profess* to have introduced it. I waive my right to offer any remarks upon the nature of such evidence, composed as it is of your own assertions, without the facts of the case, to prove your own fidelity. Apart from this consideration, does the topic, even as you have recorded it, prove any such thing as that for which you *profess* to have introduced it? Would anybody conjecture, from the above paragraph or from anything connected with it in your communication to the church, what it was designed to prove, if you had not informed them, it was "the evidence that you have not been negligent in administering council to me as a christian brother?"

The particulars of our conversation, which you have above briefly generalized, in a way peculiar to yourself and to suit your own purposes, I presume you recollect were as follow:

In August 1831, we visited the Alms-House school, being

the sub-committee particularly designated for that district. On our return, you introduced the subject of the Reading Room, rather abruptly, I thought, in the following words. "I wish you would return those books of the Reading Room; and I will tell you why." You then went on to tell me why. You said "my enemies were using the circumstance to raise a clamour against me." "If I should return them it would stop their mouths;" and other things to the same effect. After listening to you, till you had given your reasons, why, in your opinion, it would be expedient for me, under the circumstances, to return the books; I told you that I could not do so, till a report upon the concerns of the association should be made. You knew no account upon the state of the funds and property of the Reading Room had ever been rendered to the proprietors from its very foundation in 1821. And I informed you of what, indeed, you well knew before, that I had assumed the ground in the winter of 1829—30, when an attempt was made by some of the proprietors to get a knowledge of the debts and property, that I should pay no more money to the association till I was permitted to know something of the manner in which the expenditures had been and were to be made. I told you I had withheld the books in the exercise of what I esteemed my unquestionable right; and that in conformity with the ground I had before assumed, I should neither pay more money or return the books in my possession, till a development of the concerns of the association should be made. As for stopping the clamor of people, who were disposed to rail at me, I was convinced it would not accomplish the object. They would always find some pretence when they wanted one to find fault with me. "I was satisfied from my past experience that they could never be silenced by *concession*,—that I had practiced concession [not *condescension* as you have it] long enough and should defend my rights,—that I had rights as well as other men;—and I would not give a fig for life if I could not assert them like other men." I asked you why the committee, who had been appointed several weeks before for the very purpose, did not report upon the state of the concern; and said that as soon as a satisfactory report should be made, I would pay both my subscriptions and return the books. You replied, that you presumed the committee were waiting for me to return the books. I told you that could not or need not delay them a moment. They knew perfectly well what volumes I had; for I had recorded them against my name on the proper book belonging to the Reading Room. They might tell the proprietors I had them and refused to return them till a report was made. You asked me if I had told the committee so. I told you I had not; but they knew perfectly well the ground I stood upon.

You said, "why will you not write them a note and tell them distinctly your purposes?" I told you I had not the least objection to that, if it could do any good. You thought it would be well. I assured you then, that I would forthwith write a note distinctly stating the course I should pursue. Accordingly, and in conformity with your advice in that regard, I addressed a note, dated August 18, 1831, to the committee, who had been appointed to collect the books and lock them up; avowing distinctly the course I should pursue, and giving my reasons for it.

This is the conversation that passed between us at the time alluded to, in detail. Will you say that any, and if any, what part of it is not true? Will you add any particulars that are also true and at all material to the issue? I am confident you can add no particular, which looks any more like an "exposition" or "counsel administered to a christian brother," than those I have stated.

There was a particular reason for raising a clamor against me at this particular time. I mention the circumstance to show you how truly my prediction, made in our conversation at the Harvard Ordination, was fulfilled. Though my election as a representative had been triumphantly defeated by my enemies in the spring; it had been done by means, which did not inspire the greatest confidence in their real strength. Another election of the same kind was drawing near; unfortunately representative elections occurred rather frequently this year. It was feared I might be a candidate again. The old "Academy Concern" the "land and money," and the "note," had been completely used up. No more effect could then be produced with them, upon the public mind. Hence the necessity of *something new*. And hence the clamor about the Reading Room. This nine days wonder worked so well, it so far surpassed the most sanguine expectations of its contrivers and propagators, that it was thought worth while to pursue it, even farther than was at first designed. Hence the difficulties in the church, which have involved both you and me; and imposed upon me the duty of unravelling its secret springs, and displaying the motives of some of the actors.

I understood you, through the whole conversation, above detailed, and I think any one would have understood you as I did, as advising me to the course you did, merely as the best way of appeasing the clamors of my enemies, whose implacable hatred I had unfortunately incurred, and whose uncompromising hostility had followed me for several years. You gave me no intimation that I had not, in your opinion, a most perfect and unquestionable right to keep the books till a developement of the concerns of the Reading Room was made, if I chose so to

do. I had no more suspicion during that conversation, or after it down to an advanced period in the present difficulties in the church, that you supposed I had not a perfect right to do as I did, than that you were then accusing me of murder or treason. Neither do I now believe it entered into your mind at that time that I was doing wrong. If it did, why did you not say so, or give me some intimation of your views upon the subject. If you had done so at that time I should have been startled with the thought; for I had not suspected that I was upon the borders even of wrong doing. It is certainly singular that you should more than a year after the conversation pretend that you were then "expostulating" with me as a wrong-doer, and never give me the least intimation of it, till after the commencement of the present difficulties in the church, when you seemed to feel—aye and to *act* too as if you had a side to maintain. Even at my interview with you at your study, March 21, 1832, when you advised me to resign my office, neither you nor either of my other brethren gave me any intimation, that either you or they thought there was anything wrong in my conduct in any respect. On the contrary, the intention or purpose of such an imputation was expressly disclaimed both in the invitation to the interview and during its course. The only avowed ground for the advice then tendered to me was the excitement! the blaze! in town which you alleged to exist against me. My resignation was, in your opinion, necessary for the peace of the church and society!

I supposed then and believe now, that the wish you expressed to me at the examination of the Alms House school, that I would then return to the committee the volumes in my possession belonging to the Reading Room, sprung from your desire, sincere no doubt, that I should avoid a collision with those who assumed to manage the concerns of the library, by conceding my right to insist upon a developement of its affairs as a condition precedent to my paying more money or returning the books. The question in my mind and in yours, so far as I could learn or understand you, was wholly one of policy, or expediency, or perhaps of prudence. The course you recommended, was, in your opinion, best calculated to avoid the reproaches of scoffers and gainsayers. I was of a little different opinion upon that question. And while I duly appreciated what I supposed to be your motives and showed a proper respect to your opinion by adopting a part of your advice, I acted according to my own opinion of my best course in other respects. My opinion had been deliberately formed two or three years before, and had been consistently acted upon; and I did not see fit to abandon my ground to conform to the course pointed out by another, who could not know the facts of the case any better, if



so well as myself, however I might be disposed to respect the adviser. You may have been wholly right, and I may have been wholly wrong, upon that question of policy or expediency ; and yet it would be no matter of surprise ; nor would that circumstance necessarily impeach the integrity of either of us.

The committee, to whom allusion has already been made, were appointed at a meeting of some of the proprietors of the Reading Room, in July 1831. Immediately after their appointment, whether by any semblance of authority vested in them by the terms of their appointment or not I am not able to say, they proceeded to close the library and put it under lock and key ; and while they called upon all proprietors who happened to have books out at the time to return them, they refused to allow others to be taken out. Thus were all the proprietors, whether by their consent or without it, deprived of the whole use of the library. I knew such measures were unauthorized by a large number, if not a majority of the owners of the library, and I believed them wholly unnecessary. I moreover suspected, and the result has most amply confirmed my suspicions, that the steps thus taken by the committee were only preliminary to other more violent outrages upon the rights of property in the library. Reserving my remarks upon these proceedings for another part of my letter, it is my purpose here only to allude to them so far as you yourself were connected with them.

February 8th, 1832, having had the subject under consideration a period of seven months, and the proprietors mean time having been wholly deprived of the use of the library, *the committee made a report*. I trust you remember that report, as you presided or attempted to preside at the meeting of the proprietors at which it was made. Upon the reading of the report, I perceived, that whilst the committee had neglected or forgotten to give us more than the aggregates of the expenses, thus leaving us as much in the dark as we had been for ten years upon the items, and particularly upon the cost to the proprietors at which books were transferred from the shelves of the bookstore to the shelves of the Reading Room, they had stepped obviously aside from their duty to indulge in personal if not low and vulgar abuse. Especially was the course I had seen fit to pursue in the exercise of my unquestionable rights, remarked upon with peculiar severity. Notwithstanding the report was far less full and satisfactory upon the material points and interests of the proprietors, than was to be desired, or than might reasonably have been expected, from the length of time it had been under consideration and the attention the committee professed to have betowed upon it, I was willing in order to avoid further difference, to accept it as a report or as *the* report, for it was the first that had been made from authentic sources

since the establishment of the library, in 1821. I, at once avowed my readiness to accept the report as the one so long desired, and as the fulfilment of the condition, which I had insisted upon since the abortive effort in 1827-30 to get a knowledge of the concern, as essential and precedent to my paying more money into the hands of those, who, though wholly unauthorized, assumed to act in all matters for the whole of the proprietors. But inasmuch as the committee had stepped aside from the obvious path of their duty to indulge in personal abuse, I thought I had a right to insist upon that part being stricken out of the report, before it was adopted by a vote of the proprietors present. You must well remember the scenes of that evening, for they were of a character to impress your memory ; and you must remember among other things, the manner in which I declared myself ready to pay down upon the table the subscriptions I had withheld till a report should be made, and to return the volumes in my possession in the morning ; provided the personal abuse was stricken from the report before its adoption, so that I might be left upon the same footing with other proprietors, guilty of the same negligences in kind at least, if not in degree. But this just, and reasonable, and easy mode of adjusting all differences, offered by me was, as you remember, not only treated with contempt, but other abuse was added to it by several, who felt themselves able to contribute something to *their object* in attending the meeting. Of these facts and others of the same character, to which I shall have occasion in another part of my letter to allude, you were a witness ; and I dare appeal to your own recollection for their truth and accuracy. The report was adopted, and among other votes of less importance, passed by a majority of those present, was one to sell the whole library at auction and divide the proceeds, after paying the debts, among those proprietors who should call for their dividend within a year ; and the part not thus called for was vested in the Lancaster Lyceum as a sort of residuary legatee. Against this outrage upon the rights of all absent proprietors, as well as of those present not agreeing thereto, I protested, and vehemently. It was an unnecessary and wanton sacrifice of a valuable property, and that without a shadow of right in those who assumed to do it. My protestation, however, was not heeded, and a committee was appointed to make the sale. The real object of this flagrant act of injustice, I shall by and by more clearly show. I have thus briefly alluded to this scene, and these facts, in this place, only to enable me to show the opinion you formed and expressed upon my course at the time, and in full view of these and all the facts of the case. I am perfectly aware of the comparatively trifling nature of these transactions. They would not be worth the paper their description

covers ; nor would those who were chiefly concerned in them be worth a moment's consideration, if these very circumstances and the persons concerned in them had not served as the occasion or the apology of more grave and important proceedings. They have no consequence or importance in the world except that which has been given to them by you. As you have referred to them as the apology for grave proceedings in the church, you have obliged me to review the scenes, and to state the facts of the case, in order to justify myself and show you, even with evidence out of your own mouth, what less than a shadow you have as the basis of the proceedings you here instituted and induced the church to adopt in regard to me.

Soon after the meeting just mentioned, it became my duty to attend with you the examination of the George Hill School. Our duties being done as examiners of the school, you took a seat in my sleigh to ride home. I embraced the opportunity, (not "long sought," for only a few days had elapsed since the meeting,) to allude to the transactions of that evening. I enquired "how you liked to preside over such people." "If I had known any thing of the character and purposes of the meeting," said you, "I should have been caught any where sooner than there." "Did you ever hear such violent and outrageous abuse," said I ; "really they could not wait for each to abuse in turn." "I was glad," said you, "to hear you stop Jo. A\*\*\*\*\*'s mouth as you did." I told you there were several things in the transactions of that evening, which I wished you to remember. One point, to which I particularly called your attention was, that after the report of the committee had been read, I offered to pay down my assessments that night upon the table and return the books in my possession in the morning, provided they would strike out of the report just read those paragraphs, which contained personal and invidious reflections upon my character. I called your attention to other points in the transactions, and expressed the wish that you would fix them in your memory ; but as they are not material to *this part* of my letter I do not now insert them from my memoranda. You said you recollected the facts to which I particularly referred you, perfectly, and you thought you should not soon forget them. I asked you if you thought I said anything that my enemies could make use of to injure me. You replied that "you thought my course was remarkably prudent, and that I had put my enemies completely in the wrong in the matter." You went on and volunteered the remark, that you thought the committee had pursued a most unwarrantable course in the report. "What business had they" said you, "to go out of their way to indulge in personal reflections upon you." "The facts of the case it would have been proper for them to state," you

continued, "and to that you could have no objection ; but for them to go out of their way to indulge in such personal abuse, I think it was too bad, or I think it was abominable."

What impression could I receive from such a conversation as this, and your own conscience must bear you witness that I give a perfectly fair account of it, but that you were highly satisfied with the course I had taken at the meeting, whatever you might have thought of the original policy of my measures for getting a report upon the concerns of the library ? If I had "*put my enemies completely in the wrong*," by showing that I had no design in withholding my assessments and the volumes, which happened to be in my possession when the library was closed, beyond that of getting a report upon the state of the concern, in your opinion, knowing, as you certainly did, all the circumstances of the case, I felt quite sure that my course could not be distorted by any ingenuity even into imprudence. These convictions of mine, in regard to the opinion you entertained of my course, even regarded as a matter of policy or expediency, received strength and confirmation, from the fact that you expressed your approbation of the course I took at the meeting of the proprietors of the Reading Room to another of the school committee, a day or two afterwards, and made use of the same language, viz ; "*that I put my enemies completely in the wrong*." These facts are true. They are, moreover, and have been from the beginning, within your personal knowledge. I have no fear whatever of their being controverted ; nor yet of any thing else being adduced to essentially qualify them, or give them another bearing and color. And yet this is the transaction now brought up, and brought up by you of all other men in the world, to justify proceedings in a church of Christ against me as one guilty of a crime ! I am filled with astonishment, as I review these facts and transactions, in which you took so conspicuous a part, at the new and extraordinary attitude you have recently assumed towards me, and the consequences that have been brought about in the church by your means.

I have now, in conformity with the purpose I announced to you at the beginning of this letter, "reminded you of some of the facts in the history of my relation to you as pastor of our church, and refreshed your recollection with a pretty full account of the commencement and course of my official relations to you and to my brethren of the church" down to the period of your recent movements and the consequent proceedings of the church against me. In the communication, which I made to the church July 13, 1832, in answer to their vote requesting me to resign my office, I stated only those facts of the case, which I had taken materially into consideration in coming to my decision, and which I thought were essential to show my

brethren the grounds of that decision. I did then as I would have been done by, rather than I *was* done by. I frankly and fully stated the reasons of my decision, upon the vote of the church, while my brethren, though often requested so to do, by me and others, wholly declined to explain their course, or give me any reasons for their public proceedings against me to oust me from my office. I was not at that time disposed, however, to introduce any facts or circumstances into the controversy not essential to the decision of the question my brethren had obliged me to consider. But that I did not then consider myself as having stated all the facts and circumstances of the case, which I esteemed most injurious and oppressive, and which it might become my duty to state in some contingencies, will be apparent from the following paragraph from my answer:

"In what remains of this communication I shall allude only to *those parts* of the public proceedings against me, which seem to have an important and essential bearing upon the question before me. I will remark, however, before I proceed further, that I have been a careful and I think an accurate observer of *all* the facts and circumstances connected with these public proceedings, and that I have taken ample means to preserve a record of them. *On most of these facts and circumstances I am now silent.* They are not essential to the decision of the question before me, and I have not yet become the accuser of any one. At some future time, however, if this unfortunate controversy is to be pursued in the church, *I reserve to myself the right of stating all the facts and circumstances of the case, together with such remarks upon their connexion and bearing, as I may think necessary to render them perfectly intelligible.*"

The contingency, which I feared, has occurred; and devolved upon me the necessity of developing those proceedings more fully; particularly the part, which you individually and personally, have taken in them. If the part I describe as yours, should seem to constitute a large part or the whole of the proceedings, you must not blame me, for removing the slight covering you have been able to throw over your movements, and tracing the actions of the church to their true cause and source. The fault of your exposure, if there be any fault in it, will not be mine. Your misfortune lies in the real unmistified truth of the case. My deepest regret touching the matter, is, that self-defence should devolve upon me the duty of uncovering your proceedings and tracing out your tortuous course.

There had nothing occurred, I will premise, in the whole history of our acquaintance to prepare me at all for the new and extraordinary attitude you assumed towards me, when you made up your mind, that "my continuance in office alarmingly endangered the peace and prosperity of the church and society," and that, "my

resignation or removal was an indispensable measure." What new and sudden lights you had discovered, shining so full upon the peace and prosperity of the church and society ; or by what process of reasoning and forecast you had arrived at such conclusions, without consultation or communication with me, you have not been kind enough to show. The reasons given or the apologies offered for your course have been throughout expressed in such general, vague, and mistified terms, as might mean anything, everything, or nothing, as the exigency might require. Nothing could be, or was apparently designed to be, understood by the church except that it was *your opinion* that I ought, and *your wish* that I should go out of office. I could not reasonably expect to controvert your *opinion*, when I was not permitted to know the grounds of it, except that it was founded on *something* upon which "*you could confidently rely.*" Nor could I devise any means of approach to your heart, by which I might change your *wishes* upon a point, however interesting to me, while I did not know how, when, or by whose sympathy you had conceived your wishes. The attitude you assumed towards me, when you made your arrangements to vacate my office, and as the first step towards it, to tender me your advice to resign, was certainly unexpected. The position you then took and have since so consistently maintained was as perfectly astonishing to me as it was to our mutual friends both in our own church, and in the neighboring churches. For I believe it had given them pleasure to see us take counsel together for the promotion of objects of common interest to the community. But I have been at as little of a loss to understand your personal feelings towards me since you knew I hesitated to conform to your advice to resign my office; or to understand what were your personal wishes in regard to the proceedings of the church against me ; as I was to understand your feelings towards me, and your wishes in regard to the proceedings of the church, when I was in the progress of promotion ; notwithstanding you professed the same impartiality at both periods, and notwithstanding your recent profuse and solemn asseverations of tenderness and regard. Your public invocations of a spirit of charity and forbearance to characterize the proceedings of the church, and your earnestness in imploring light from above to direct their deliberations, while you withheld the light in your own possession, and when the preparations "to accomplish the business,"—to carry "the indispensable measure,"—were already made, have not deceived even men of the most superficial observation. Perhaps you have good reasons, known only to yourself, by which you can make it appear that I have not deserved any candor or charity, or deliberation. However that may be, I am certain that all your affectation of

those qualities, hitherto, has not at all concealed your real and fixed purpose from the beginning, that I should go out of office;—peaceably if I would, forcibly if I must. The “measure” being known to you from the beginning to be “indispensable,” *per fas aut nefas*, “the business must be accomplished.”

On the 14th March, 1832, a committee appointed at a meeting of some of the proprietors of the Reading Room, proceeded to sell at auction the books and property of the whole concern, under and by authority only of a vote of a majority of the proprietors then resident in Lancaster and present at the meeting. It was at this sale, in your own language, “that it was announced as a matter of notoriety, that Deacon James G. Carter had been a plunderer of the Reading Room.” It is not necessary for my present purpose either to controvert or admit your particular version of the slander. You certainly will have no cause to complain, if, in tracing your course in the premises, I give the account in your own words. At the utterance of this slander, you say in your “Reply,” from which I have already quoted, “there was a general burst of astonishment and indignation.” Why people should be “astonished” at what you allege was “matter of notoriety,” is not obvious to my understanding; nor have you informed us against whom the astonishment and indignation were excited. It is my sincere belief, that if they had burst upon any one, they would have fallen on a very different head from mine, if they had not been directed by yourself. Between the 14th and the 21st March, by your own showing, you had not only made up your mind that it was “an indispensable measure” that I should go out of office, but you had devised the means for “accomplishing the business.” For, availing yourself of a casual opportunity not sought by Deacon Wilder for any such purpose, you endeavored to persuade him to call on me and advise me to resign my office. Failing in your attempt to make him the instrument for “accomplishing the business” in that way, you selected him and our brother Ezra Sawyer to be associated with you in an interview with me, for the purpose of giving the same advice. And all these means were taken and arrangements made by you for “accomplishing the business,” in the short space of seven days!

On the 21st March, your arrangements having been made the day previous, our brother Sawyer extended your invitation to the interview to be held at your house the same evening. Brother Sawyer, in conformity no doubt with his instructions or with your mutual agreement, upon the point, took especial care in giving the invitation to disclaim for himself and for you all, any imputation upon my character or motives. For he said to me,

among other things, "that you wished to meet me not as accusers, but in a friendly way as brethren." "The brethren I was to meet had always been friendly to me." It was with this understanding that I accepted your invitation; for if I had understood it in any other way, I should of course have allowed you to wait upon me in your own time and manner. He said I had been twice publicly accused and had done nothing about it, and you wished to know what was to be my course for vindicating my character. It was only seven days after the utterance of the slander, and it seemed to be a pretty short time to expect I should have made up my mind what course to take; but presuming I was to meet friends, who could favor me with good advice upon the subject, I did not hesitate to accept the invitation.

At the interview at your study in the evening of March 21, you all renewed your protestations of friendship, and avowed no motive, but to talk over the state of excitement, which you alleged to exist in town against me on account of the accusation made in the town-house, at the auction of the property of the Reading Room. The knowledge of the excitement, which was the ostensible ground of your proceedings, I perceived was almost wholly confined to you and brother Sawyer. Deacon Wilder professed to know very little or nothing about it, except what he had learned from you at an accidental meeting the day previous. I listened to your description of the excitement and blaze against me with astonishment, I must confess; but yet with gratitude to you for your kindness in apprizing me of what I supposed from your representations was the fact. For this was the first I had heard of it; no intimation of such a blaze and excitement having been given to me by any one. Not even a whisper of private, individual discontent with my course had reached my ear from any member of the church. Upon your annunciation of the fact, that the church were excited against me, because I had been publicly accused in the town-house, seven days before, and had done nothing to show that I did not acquiesce in the accusation, and that many "*had been*" to you upon the subject;—and upon your statements being confirmed and added to "*four-fold*" by Mr. Sawyer;—I could not but rejoice to be apprized of the alarming state of things. I supposed that my brethren of the church, if they were, as you represented them, excited against me, were acting under a misapprehension of the facts of the case;—and that I was sure of being sustained in my course in regard to the Reading Room by you, after your recent and repeated declarations, with a full knowledge of the facts, that "*I had put my enemies completely in the wrong,*" in the matter. If the state of excitement was so great as to endanger the orderly administration of the Lord's



Supper, as you represented ; and if the whole town was enveloped in a blaze, as Mr. Sawyer represented ; then, indeed, I was prepared for your declaration, and was wholly of your opinion that " something must be done to allay " these portentous evils. Being conscious that there was no real ground or cause for such a state of things, and being confident also, that *you knew* there was no cause for it, I proposed the course to allay the excitement, which I thought would be most effectual. My course in regard to the Reading Room, being the only ground alleged, or alluded to by you, at that time as the cause of the alienation of respect and confidence of the church, I proposed at once to have the church called together, and offered to bring all the facts of the case before them. I was sure, if I could do this, I should obviate all discontent and allay all excitement among my brethren of the church. To this course *you* at once objected, and said, the church would not resolve itself into a court to try me; and besides, if they did, they could not receive as evidence my statements. And why could they not receive as evidence my statements ? There was nothing formal in the matter. You told me the church were excited against me for a particular private transaction. Who was excited I was not informed. Nor could I learn that the evidence of the facts, about which they were said to be excited, was any better than " my statements " would have been. You were particular to inform me, upon my inquiry who had complained about my course with regard to the Reading Room, that no formal complaint had been made by any one. As no specific fact was alleged by you or any one, and as no one had been willing to avow himself as ready to stand responsible for, or make good any charge as the ground of their dissatisfaction, it was not obvious why I might not have been permitted to make a statement of the facts of the case. In the exercise of only moderate charity and forbearance, my brethren would have given me a patient hearing, and allowed at least as much weight to my statements as they had to the hearsays, on which the excitement was based. But the church, you said, could not receive *my* statements as evidence. " Well," said I, " then you may state the facts of the case to them yourself. You know them as well as I do." I was still confident that my course had met your individual approbation. But the church, you replied, would not be called together. Yet these tremendous evils were hanging over us, and " something must be immediately done " to avert them. What could I do, if neither the church collectively nor any individual of it would assume the responsibility of stating specifically the cause of the alleged excitement; and would not assemble to hear a statement in general touching the only avowed ground of their feelings? I will do my brethren of the church

the justice to say, that I do not believe there was a single individual of them, at the time of this interview, who knew anything of your movements or purposes, or who had given you any authority to take such a course in their behalf. Your plan "for accomplishing the business" was wholly unknown to all the members of the church, except the two whom you had chosen to be associated with you. And to them it was but partially revealed. For I believe that both Deacon Wilder and brother Sawyer, would at that time have been shocked with your plan, if you had told them the whole of your real purposes.

I was not long in perceiving, that notwithstanding your abounding protestations of tenderness and regard, your real attitude towards me was any thing but what friendship would have dictated. The church were in a blaze on my account, and yet no brother had spoken to me upon the subject. No brother had complained of my course to you, or if any had, it had been in a secret whisper, and not in a way which would enable me to meet the charge, or in a way which would make anyone responsible for maintaining the charge. The church, you alleged, were so excited as to endanger the orderly administration of one of the ordinances, and yet would not assemble to hear me touching the cause of their excitement,—could not receive as evidence my statements,—and would not be called together to hear even you state the facts of the case to them. But still "something must be done."—"something must be *immediately* done to allay the excitement." I admit, and shall by and by show, that this was altogether an imaginary state of things, except so far as it depended upon your pleasure; though the picture was drawn by you and alleged by you to be true. It is, therefore, reality for all purposes of showing your way of evincing tenderness and regard, not to say christian charity and forbearance,—I would not name in this connexion common decency of deportment between man and man.

There was great apparent hesitation and reluctance to state the purpose for which you had invited me to this meeting; though that purpose had been agreed upon the day previous. No one I think will be surprised at the awkwardness of the scene, when he considers the relation, in which we stood to each other, and the importance of the step you were about to take. In this state of the interview, however, it did not require the exercise of great sagacity to anticipate what measures you were about to take. When, by my assistance to relieve the embarrassment of the moment, you announced your purpose, you did it in a way to avoid *personal* responsibility. Your language was: "*it has been suggested to me that you ought immediately to resign the office of Deacon in the church.*" I

had no idea of closing the interview without knowing who gave such advice ; but it was not till I had several times spoken of the advice as yours, that you perceived the necessity of showing your attitude, so far as to say that your own opinion of my best course coincided with that just given. I have endeavored to learn, but have never yet been able to ascertain who *suggested that course to you*, though I have without effort found *you most earnestly suggesting the course* to very many members of the church.

To resign the office of deacon in the church, under the circumstances above stated, was your advice. And to strengthen the motive of fear in me, which seemed to be your chief reliance, "for accomplishing the business," you said many *had been* to you upon the subject. The question of resigning my office having been thus presented to me by you, I began to consider the consequences of such a step. The first and obvious consequence of such a measure; would have been an implied dereliction of duty in some respect relating to the Reading Room, of which I was not at all conscious. I considered moreover and told you, in our interview, that the dissatisfied members of the church could not with any consistency stop with my resignation of my office. If I had done any thing to make such a course necessary the church ought to pursue me as a member, and they probably would do so. Deacon Wilder said, No ! never ! Mr. Sawyer said he should be willing to pledge himself, that if I resigned, no farther steps would be taken in regard to the matter by any of the church. These facts show conclusively, that you had not at that time expressed to either of the brethren, you had chosen to be associated with you, any doubts as to the correctness of my *moral* conduct. They would not have been so prompt and decisive in speaking of the future proceedings of the church, if they had received either from you or any other source any impression unfavorable to my integrity of character or the *morality* of my course in regard to the Reading Room. This confidence in the purity of my motives and the integrity of my character was still farther confirmed by Mr. Sawyer on our return from your house. "For myself," said he, "I should be as well satisfied to sit down under your administration as a deacon, as I ever was, or as I should be with any other person in your place; but I think it the best step that can be taken for the peace of the *society* and for your peace." Although you had prevailed upon our mutual friends without any consultation with me to join you in an interview, in which you were to advise me to resign ; yet it was with no personal dissatisfaction and no suspicion on their part that there was any substantial cause for the hostility to me, which was the cause of your movement.

I received your advice with the respect due to your station,

and the relation in which we stood to each other and the church, rather than what was due to its intrinsic character. Advice voluntarily tendered to a man of ordinary sagacity and forecast, without the facts upon which it is based, but resting upon the personal authority of the adviser alone, must be admitted to be poor and insufficient ground for action, in so grave a matter as that of resigning an office in the church. The only facts, or statements purporting to be facts, you alleged to justify the advice tendered to me, were the excitement in the church and society. My resignation you *then* urged as expedient to allay the excitement. "My resignation or removal," you now say "was an indispensable measure for the peace of the church and society." And moreover you knew *then* it was an indispensable measure; for you have since, in your own language, only "been *more firmly* established in the belief" that it was so. To resign an office in the church upon advice merely, when nothing was alleged even by the adviser, as the ground of the advice, except an excitement for which I knew, and believed you knew, there was no adequate cause, would be placing myself, by my own act, in a most humiliating attitude before the world. If it did not prostrate my character and destroy my usefulness in the community, it must inevitably greatly impair both.

The advantage to others and the good to the community must not only be very great, but very obvious and certain, to require or justify such voluntary immolation of oneself with all his hopes and prospects of usefulness in life. Any prudent man in circumstances in which you had placed me by your advice, would I think first examine pretty thoroughly into the truth and reality of the alleged blaze and excitement; for these were the most definite forms in which the objections to my continuing in office met me. If the facts alleged as the ground or cause of your advice should prove not to be facts, here would be an end of the deliberation. But even if the blaze and excitement had turned out to be realities, I should naturally have inquired farther whether they could not be appeased in some other way and without so fatal a sacrifice on my part. And if I had found, that they could not be appeased in any other way than the one you advised, still the inquiry would remain, whether it was of consequence enough to appease them at all, to justify or require me to offer myself up a sacrifice to this relentless Moloch, which otherwise, it was urged, threatened to destroy, without mercy or forbearance, the peace of the church and society.

If all these questions had been answered according to your wishes, then and not till then would it have become my duty to yield myself up as the victim; and I trust I should have met my

fate, hard as it might be, with firmness and resignation. But on proceeding to the business of investigating the first question, as to the truth or reality of the alleged excitement, it was decided by most abundant and conclusive evidence, in a way, which made it unnecessary to consider the others at all. I took prompt, efficient, and certain means to ascertain the nature and extent of the excitement. And I was perfectly convinced that it had no existence in the church, at the time it was alleged as the ground of your advice. I was convinced by evidence, which could not and cannot be perverted, that the excitement you feared was in a *very different quarter* from my brethren of the church. The blaze, which had so filled the horizon of your vision, and which was alleged to have enveloped the whole town, was so small in the church, after all, that none could find it, but those who had kindled and were fanning it. And even you, who pretended to be so alarmed at the approaching conflagration, either could not or would not tell us where we might go, in particular, to find the cause of your alarm.

Immediately after tendering your advice, finding that I was disposed to exercise a sound discretion whether to take it or not, and was inquiring into the truth of your alleged facts, you made calls upon brethren of the church, how many I do not know, and *gave them* information, frequently I have no doubt, their first information, of the excitement, you had before alleged as the ground of your advice. You endeavored to induce some brethren, who you supposed would have personal influence with me, to sanction and confirm your advice; and as a reason why they should do so you magnified greatly beyond the truth the extent of the uneasiness in the church. I could particularize times, and persons and things said to them by you, if necessary; but it would carry me into a degree of detail, which I would if possible avoid. And I am persuaded you will not require it. You well know the brethren of the church will bear witness to your assiduity in this behalf. Having alleged the existence of an excitement in the church so great as to endanger the orderly administration of the Lord's Supper, as the ground for advising one of your deacons to resign his office, you seemed to act as if causing the excitement afterwards would prove your assertion true. Whereas any blaze, even one sufficient to consume both you and me, kindled afterwards, would not affect either the truth or the falsehood of your previous assertion. Was the assertion true, and did you know it to be true, *when* you made it? Your subsequent success in spreading the excitement into the church, alarming the fears of the quiet and orderly brethren with *something* they could not see or understand, and by your personal influence with them, carrying the "indispensable measure," can have no bearing upon this question. How many

and what members of the church had called upon you previous to March 21, for the purpose of making known their personal dissatisfaction with my conduct, or expressing their grief on my account? I beg you to understand, I do not inquire how many members of the *parish or town you had called upon*, or "*had conversed*" with, introducing the subject yourself. This sort of evidence of which you have been so profuse to prove your assertion that the *church* was excited, does not reach the point at all. And yet you have not to my knowledge, adduced any other. Even if the whole church should *now* say, in order to sustain you, that they had always been excited against me, it would not justify your assertion. Because you could not have known the fact a *year ago*, by what they may say *now*.

On the morning of March 29th, having been active, meantime, in alarming the fears of the peaceable members of the church, and in endeavoring to induce others of my friends to join you in your advice, you called at my house apparently to see how I was making up my mind. You reiterated your advice and increased your earnestness upon the subject. You said again, as you had said before for the same purpose, the church were excited. You did not know what might be the consequence, if you should undertake to administer the ordinance of the Supper and I should attempt to officiate. As evidence of your assertion you repeated what you had said before, that many *had been* to you upon the subject. I inquired as I had inquired before, without receiving any answer, who had been to you? You replied, if I wished to know you would tell me at any time. I wish to know now, said I. You then answered; the three deacons, Mr. Ezra Sawyer, Capt. Lincoln, and John G. Thurston *had conversed* with you upon the subject. You had alleged a state of excitement in the church as the ground of your advice to me, and to prove the truth or reality of the excitement in the church, you had repeatedly told me many *had been* to you. And you now promised to tell me who; that is, in the connexion who *had been* to you. But you paid my understanding a poor compliment if you supposed, that I should not detect your equivocation, when you only informed me certain persons *had conversed* with you. Much less could you suppose, without presuming greatly upon my stupidity, that I should receive the assertion that certain persons *not* of the church *had conversed* with you, as evidence of an excitement in the church. Upon my inquiry who introduced the subject when the above gentlemen conversed with you, you said, you did not think that material, but you presumed you introduced it *YOURSELF*. So you would have me understand the fact that you had introduced the subject and conversed with people *out* of the church as evidence of a state of alarming excitement *in*

the church. The insult to my understanding, however humble it may be, implied by your equivocation in the conversation above stated, you have never apologized for or explained; although the circumstances of the conversation were stated in my "Answer" communicated to the church, to which you have made a formal and written "Reply."

Another topic in our conversation at my house, March 29, to which I have never alluded in any communication to you or the church, and to which I should not now allude, if you had not introduced it, in rather a peculiar way and for a peculiar purpose, into your "Reply." I mean the *moral wrong*. After your assertions about the excitement in the church, and your having said, you had seen no cause to alter your opinion, as to the expediency of my resigning the office of deacon, I thought you pressed your advice beyond civility. For, being yet unaccused by any one, it was wholly a matter of civility. I told you nothing could justify the course you were taking, but the supposition that I had done something morally wrong. Do you suppose, said I, that there is anything morally wrong, in my course relating to the Reading Room: for that was the only subject yet alleged as the cause of excitement against me. Recollecting your previous assertions, that *I had put my enemies completely in the wrong* in this matter, I did not suppose there could, in your opinion, be anything wrong on my part. You said, if you had done as I had, you should have thought it *morally wrong* in yourself. I was not a little surprised at this, after your former approbation of my course, and pursued the inquiry thus: "Dr. Thayer, do you suppose I have intentionally done what I knew to be wrong?" You said "No!" and added, "I have charity for you. But the law could have nothing to do with my motives." I do not know what law you meant; but if you meant the law of God, which is the only law, that reaches motives, and therefore the only one it would have been pertinent for you to refer to in answer to my question, you did not evince a very profound knowledge of casuistry. It must be remembered, that you and I had held various conversations upon this subject alone and in other company. And it must be remembered that you had assumed an attitude towards me and a responsibility in advising me to resign, eight days before this time, which much needed for its justification something wrong on my part, which neither you nor any other brother had yet ventured to insinuate. The facts of the case had been completely in your knowledge from the beginning. If you had ever intended to put your advice upon such ground, why had you not said so to Deacon Wilder and Mr. Sawyer? Why had you not made some intimation of this *new view* of yours touching my course with the Reading Room? Not a word escaped

your lips to my knowledge even insinuating such a thing, notwithstanding we had conversed upon the subject so freely and so often. And even at last, I drew it from you, by telling you nothing else could justify your measures, and putting the question in direct terms. And your answer after all came in such qualified and mitigated terms, as to amount to no more than a partial apology for your previous advice. It may not redound to our mutual credit, but still it would be true, if I should say, we had both become a little *animated* in the conversation, and I had told you, if I resigned my office, I should resign with it my connexion with your church and society.

At a subsequent interview with you, when I informed you that I had made up my mind not to resign my office in conformity with your advice, I introduced the subject of the *moral wrong*. I told you it might be your duty, being my minister, to talk to me about moral wrong, or what you chose now for your own purposes to denominate by such names. But I should not bear such an imputation, in my own house, from any other man, without resenting it in a summary manner. And, moreover, if you told any body else, I had done morally wrong, it would be slander, and I would hold you responsible for it forthwith. Knowing that you were busy with the members of the church, and having good cause to believe you were endeavoring to alienate from me their confidence, I was at some pains to learn what language you used in talking of this matter to them. I found you sometimes calling my course with the Reading-Room *imprudent*, sometimes *dishonorable*, and in one instance, after I had drawn the expression from you, *morally wrong*. I leave you to adjust with your own conscience the *morality* and the *honor* of riding about the town, and making these and similar insinuations with regard to me without stating to me specifically the charge, and giving me an opportunity to meet it. I have been the more particular to state these circumstances in regard to your treatment of me, yet wholly unaccused by any one brother of the church, in order to show you, that I understand the means by which the necessary excitement was produced in the church "to accomplish the business,"—to carry "the indispensable measure."

The next and only remaining topic in our conversation at my house, March 29, to which I shall allude, relates to what was said about my dismission from your church, and recommendation to another. As my statement upon this point is the only one, in the long narration of facts and circumstances contained in my "Answer" to the church, which you make even the pretence of disputing in your formal "Reply," I think it worth while to present the statement, together with your refutation of



it at length. I wish to show your ingenuity and success in controverting my facts. My statement was as follows :

"I told Dr. Thayer at this interview that if I resigned my office I should resign with it my connexion with the church and society. He said he should regret that course. I asked him, if, should I wish to join another Unitarian society in the neighborhood, *his church* would give me a dismission and recommendation? He said, 'yes—at least I should make no objection.' 'However,' continued he, 'I should not think it advisable to apply for one immediately.' I have recited this part of our conversation before you, my brethren, because I think it had an important bearing upon the question then before me. It showed me that the resignation of my office was considered as merely a prudential measure; for, if there was in the estimation of the Pastor, anything in my character, which could render me unworthy of a place in his church, he could not, with good faith, recommend me, or consent to my recommendation by his church, to a sister church."

You meet this statement in the following paragraph, quoted from your "Reply."

"I do most solemnly affirm, that the statement he has made, that I *first* gave an unqualified answer in the affirmative to his question, whether in case he should leave the society I would give him a dismission and recommendation to another Unitarian Society in the neighbourhood, has no foundation in truth. I think no one can give credit to this statement, who considers for one moment, that it was a question which must eventually be decided by the Church; that in the course of the conversation I had told him, that in taking and retaining the books, he had done what in my opinion was *morally wrong*. At the same time also I was informed by him, that he was about to commence a civil action for the vindication of his character. All which it was proper for me to say or which I did say was, that I would submit the question, if desired, to the brethren, and that the present would be a very improper time to make the application."

I have a few remarks to offer; first, upon what you would have us understand to be your "solemn affirmation," that something in my statement "has no foundation in truth," and secondly, upon the reasons you adduce to render it more probable that your statement is true, than mine. I premise that I took particular pains to make and preserve a record of that conversation at the time it was had, and I was careful to state it accurately in my "Answer," as it stands above. The plot had so thickened about me, that I perceived that if I held my office in the church, it must be in spite of you, and not by your assistance or even impartiality between me and my enemies. And I told you so then. Hence having had a free conversation with you, and having drawn from you, some of your views of the case, which I thought important as putting your advice upon its proper and true footing, viz; expediency for the appeasing of my enemies, I wrote down during the same day, on which the conversation was held, all the material parts of it, preserving as well as I could recollect from the forenoon to the

afternoon, the very words used. I also requested Mrs. C., who was present during the whole conversation and participated in it, immediately after you left the house, to write down our words. She did so. And although I did not refer to or see her memorandum till I was preparing my answer to the church in July following, yet I am sustained by it as well as by her distinct recollection, on the material point in the issue you have made up.

The question I asked you, it will be seen by reference to the above extract from my "Answer," was in these words: "I asked him, if, should I wish to join another Unitarian Society in the neighbourhood, Mrs. Church would give me a dismission and recommendation." The answer I attribute to you is in the following words: "He said, 'yes—at least I should make no objection. However,' continued he, 'I should not think it advisable to apply for one immediately.'" The answer to the same question, attributed to you by Mrs. C. is as follows: "I presume so, sir;—at least I should make no objection. But I should not think it expedient for you to take that course at present." Now whether you gave one of these answers or the other, is not at all material to the purpose, for which I asked the question originally, and introduced the topic into my "Answer." Both show conclusively that you knew nothing in my character generally, or in my course with the Reading-Room in particular, which could impair my standing in the church. You yielded your unqualified assent that you would make no objection to my having a dismission and recommendation from the church. This was all I wanted to draw from you, and it proves all that I designed to show, when I introduced the topic into my answer; viz; that my resignation was regarded by *you*, as well as by the brethren, whom you had chosen to be associated with you in giving your advice, as merely a prudential measure, to conciliate certain people out of the church. They demanded my sacrifice, and your whole course as well as your answer to my question, shows that *you* were prepared to offer me up, for no other reason than because they demanded it, and said they would not be peaceable without it.

But I have not done with your "solemn affirmation." Although you undoubtedly meant to convey the impression and did convey the impression to our brethren, that you denied, in the most solemn and emphatic manner, something, which I had affirmed, and thus, so far as they believed you, threw the odium of a prevarication or lie upon me; yet your language is so cautious, guarded, and qualified, that I am not quite sure, *you* could not explain it, if any exigency should require, to be consistent with my statement. You solemnly affirm, that you did not *first* give an *unqualified* answer in the affirmative to my

question. You may be aware that you gave an unqualified answer in the affirmative, and only mean to deny that you gave it *first*. From your putting the word, *first*, in italics, as emphatically important, I should be inclined to the belief, that this is the way you prepared for a retreat if you were pushed hard for your meaning. Or you may be aware that you first gave an affirmative answer but slightly qualified with the phrase, "I presume so, sir." If you intended so to frame your sentence as to obviously convey one meaning, and yet to be susceptible of others, if you were called upon to explain yourself; I think you were remarkably successful. And the parade of a "solemn affirmation" about something not at all material or important was a happy conceit to give consequence to the impression you really meant to convey to our brethren of the church. It might help you very much in now producing the state of feeling among our brethren, which you had several months before asserted as the ground of your advice.

If you do not wish to resort to either of these explanations of your "solemn affirmation," though I can hardly conceive of your so using language without some purpose of the kind; if you really meant and avow now that you mean to deny something, something material that I have said, so as to raise a question of veracity between us, pray what is it, in direct, plain, and unequivocal language, that you wish to put the stamp of falsehood upon? If I could know what you mean to deny, that I have affirmed, I should not be slow in meeting the issue, before any tribunal you might choose. As you have chosen, for your own purposes, to use language thus vague and indefinite, I have no alternative but to interpret it as well as I can, and meet you on the question of veracity before your own tribunal, the public.

You have endeavored to give your "solemn affirmation" a greater air of plausibility by mistating the question proposed to you. I asked you whether THE CHURCH would give me a dismission &c: You state the question, pretending to take it from my answer, to be, whether you would give me a dismission, &c. This mistaking of yourself for the church would have been still more surprising, if I had not been accustomed to see you make the same mistake before. You mistake the question still further when you represent me as asking whether you would give me a dismission and recommendation to another Unitarian Society. I asked you, if I should wish to join another Unitarian Society, "your church would give me a dismission and recommendation," to another Unitarian church of course. You could not for a moment suppose me to be so ignorant of the usages of our churches, as to ask a minister personally to give me a recommendation to a society. And yet all these absurdities are ap-

parent upon the face of your mode of stating the question. But your "solemn affirmation," that *something* I had stated in my Answer, "had no foundation in truth," and your adding at the close of your paragraph, the following sentence; "All which it was proper for me to say, or which I did say was, that I would submit the question, if desired, to the brethren, and that the present would be a very improper time to make the application;" show that you meant our brethren and the public to understand you, as fixing upon me a falsehood. And I propose to show how you have succeeded. Upon the question of veracity distinctly raised between us, let us see how the evidence stands. Admitting that the probabilities of my telling a lie, and of your telling a lie, in this matter, are precisely equal, and I should not be willing, and I think no one, who has read even thus far in this letter would require me, to place my character for accuracy or veracity below yours; against your "solemn affirmation," I place my "solemn assertion." If the case is now balanced between us, other evidence and circumstances must turn the scale. I wrote down the words, I have attributed to you, on the very day they were uttered. I stated them to others before this issue was joined. I have shown the original memorandum, and will show it to you, if you request it, in the midst of a book of similar memoranda with its date affixed. Have you taken any such care to be accurate in your recollection? On the contrary; when you offered your remarks to the church on the spot, in reply to my communication, you made no such solemn affirmation. You merely said touching this topic you did not recollect saying what I attribute to you. You expressly admitted you could not say that you did not use the language, I attributed to you; but this you would say, that you had no recollection whatever of using such language to me. The solemn affirmation, then, is the result of deliberation. It was not spontaneous and from the heart, without weighing the bearing of the facts stated by me. The position you had now assumed towards me, and the position into which you had led the church, made it necessary to disavow that conversation. With that conversation staring you in the face, it was too palpably plain, that your advice was merely prudential. But, if I admit that my assertion, with such extraordinary care to be accurate, and with no motive to be otherwise, is no better than your affirmation, without such care, contrary to your first impression when the subject was presented to you, and with a strong motive to get rid of the fact implied, still I have much other evidence to place in my side of the scales. I am sustained as to everything material by the memoranda and distinct recollection of Mrs. C., who heard the whole conversation alluded to. If the evidence rested here upon a question

of veracity between us, I suppose I could not in a court of law, from the relation of the witnesses, convict you of a falsehood. But if the matter were brought to that issue, I could find a man, who would do it.

But fortunately I have much other evidence all joining in the clearest manner to sustain my assertion. You have endeavored to fortify your affirmation, by referring to the circumstances of the case. I thank you for the suggestion of that mode of reasoning; for I shall show you that the circumstances of the case make evidence altogether the other way. It will be recollected that in the invitation to the interview, at which you tendered your advice to me to resign my office, all imputations upon my character and motives were expressly disclaimed. The same idea was studiously kept up through that interview. It was only necessary that I should resign in order to preserve the peace of the church. No one wished, I was assured, to impair my christian standing, or abridge my christian privileges. You made many of the brethren of the church believe, and you endeavored to make me believe, that my resignation under the circumstances would not impair my christian standing; because, forsooth, I might tell the church in my resignation, that "I was conscious of rectitude, and resigned out of tenderness and respect to my aggrieved brethren." You kept up the same idea that no imputation was intended upon my christian character through the whole conversation in which I attribute to you the language, which you now solemnly deny. You were asked distinctly in the same conversation, whether I could retain my standing in the church, after being driven from my office. Certainly, or by all means, said you; no one would object to your continuing a member of the church. In your "Reply," read to the church four months afterwards, the same idea is still before us. For you say there, as you had always said before, "there was no wish or intention to deprive him of the enjoyment of any privilege of a christian brother." Now it is an undoubted christian privilege, which every member of a church in regular standing has a right to expect and demand, to be recommended to another church upon his request. If you would not, then, deny me any privilege of a christian brother, you could not but have given an *affirmative answer* to my question! The language I attributed to you is perfectly consistent with all your previous language upon the subject, as well as with that used afterwards by you. Whereas if you admit that I asked you the question, and deny that you gave an affirmative answer in the fullest manner you could, it would be an insulated step, wholly inconsistent, incompatible, and out of keeping with all your language before and after it.

Your attempt to strengthen the probability of truth on your side, by reference to the circumstances of the case, is singularly unfortunate for you. You say: "I think no one can give credit to this statement, who considers, for one moment, that it was a question, which must eventually be decided by the Church." The whole force of this argument depends upon your misstatement of my question. I knew perfectly well, that by the usage of the churches generally, and of our church in particular, letters of recommendation were voted by the brethren. And therefore I should not ask you personally to give me a recommendation. I did not ask you such a question. And I did not so state the question in my communication to the church. My question was before you in distinct and definite terms in my "Answer," when you mistated it in your "Reply." On a question of veracity between a Clergyman and a Deacon, one would suppose greater accuracy and fairness might be reasonably expected. It must be obvious to the slightest observation, that the whole force of your argument depends upon your own misstatement. If you expected to give strength to your affirmation by such means, I have only to say you are greatly mistaken in the nature of the evidence. As to the air of solemnity with which you introduced this topic, whether it be equivocation in language, which any man of much less pretensions than yourself, ought to be ashamed to adopt in speaking to a christian church or a christian public, or whether it be a charge of falsehood raised by a clergyman against a deacon, I am very sure it will not answer your purpose in producing conviction. For discriminating minds will not allow you in this issue to make up in solemnity what you lack in evidence.

I have now said all that can be necessary for me to say upon the question of veracity. With the overwhelming amount of the clearest positive and circumstantial evidence I have adduced to meet your solitary, unsustained, though "solemn affirmation," I am perfectly willing, without attempting to add any thing to the weight of my solemnity, to submit the question to the public; whether the falsehood, if there be one between us, as you have endeavored to show, does not fall back upon yourself.

I have stated in a former part of my letter the circumstances relating to the vessels and furniture of the table being committed to my care soon after I entered upon my duties as a deacon, by my brethren in office. The deacons of a church, I presume you understand, are a corporation recognized in law, in whom is vested, and who are responsible for, the property of the church. At the first communion after you had advised me to resign my office, and before I had determined whether to take your advice or not, no public meeting of the church having yet

been had, the sexton called in the morning as usual, but *without bringing the bread to be prepared for the table*. Why did he not bring it? It had been his invariable custom. The circumstance of my being from home could not have been known to him, for it was not known to myself till the evening previous; and then was not made public. The sexton neither brought the bread to be prepared for the table as usual, but he never enquired for me. He took the furniture of the table, and did not return it in the evening, as he had always done before, but carried it to another place. I knew the circumstance of being absent from home could have had no influence in determining any body to transfer the property from my care to other hands; because it could not have been known to anybody that I should be absent. I did not believe my brethren in office had determined previously, without consulting me upon the subject, to place the property in the care of another. Nor did I believe it consistent with the faithful and unassuming character of the sexton, to venture upon the responsibility, unsolicited and unadvised by any one, of removing the church property from the place, in which he had been directed by the competent authority to put it. Nor yet did I believe that any other member of the church but yourself, who had already shown such a decided determination to have my office vacated, at any rate, would presume or think of such a thing as taking the property of the church from my care, without at least consulting me upon the subject. I made it my business to ascertain with certainty, forthwith, whether the deacons had given any directions for the removal of the property from my care. I found not only that they had given no orders for such a transaction, but that they were very much surprised such a step should have been taken. It was a step calculated, certainly, in my situation at that particular time, not only to wound my feelings, but to convey the impression to others that I had lost the confidence of my brethren in office. It conveyed the imputation either that my brethren in office did no longer choose to have the property exposed to my "plundering" disposition, or that they considered it a settled matter that I was to be ousted from office. I may have done you injustice, but I must confess that I suspected that you had either given the order to the sexton, or that the suggestion of the step originated with you. The supposition was not wholly inconsistent with what I had seen of your measures "for accomplishing the business," and I could not account for the transaction in any other way without involving greater improbabilities. Accordingly, when you called upon me a few days afterwards, to ascertain whether I was about to take your advice or not, having informed you that I should not resign under present circumstances, I asked you a question thus: "Do you

know by whose order or direction the church plate was removed from my house ?” “I did not know *the fact* ;” you replied. Your answer so far from relieving my suspicions, confirmed them that you were at the bottom of the transaction. You did not answer my question. You only told me, you did not know as the order was executed. I asked no further question, because it would not have been quite civil, seeing you were under no obligations to answer me, and appeared quite desirous to satisfy my curiosity with one decisive and emphatic answer : “I did not know *the fact*.” Now suppose I should ride to the sexton’s house, or suppose I should sit in my study and tell the sexton, or tell somebody else, or request or suggest to somebody else to tell the sexton to take an article of furniture from your house and place it at brother Ezra Sawyer’s; and suppose next week I should be at your house, and you should ask me if I knew by whose order that furniture was removed, and I should say “I did not know *the fact*,” because I had not seen the order executed or the suggestion acted upon, would it be quite civil to ask me immediately any more questions about it? I think not. Still I should like to know some time when it would be civil to ask the question, who originated the idea, at that particular time, of removing the furniture of the table from my house to Mr. Sawyer’s; or whether any body “suggested the measure to you,” or “conversed with you” or “had been to you” about it before it was done. I am not particularly desirous of knowing, who is *now* willing to assume the responsibility of the measure, because I hope both you and I have many friends, who would be willing to assume such a responsibility for us in an emergency. If the sexton ventured upon that step undirected, unsolicited, and without the suggestion of any one, I venture to say, that all who know his modest and unassuming character would be ready to hazard the assertion, that he never did before, and probably never would again, do such a bold and audacious act.

I had experienced all these evidences of your professed “desire to treat me with all possible tenderness” before the middle of April; and the preceding pages truly state our position and relation to each other at that time. From the first moment your advice to resign was tendered to me, I had used all diligence, caution, and circumspection to ascertain, what was the course of prudence and duty under the circumstances. I had particularly, both personally and by my friends, endeavored to satisfy myself as to the truth and reality of the excitement against me in the church, alleged by you as the ground of your advice. And my inquiries resulted in the perfect conviction, that there was no excitement or dissatisfaction among my brethren, which needed or could excite your fears. I was



satisfied and many of my friends and brethren were satisfied, that the excitement against me if there was any worth noticing, and the real cause of your unnecessary alarm was in a very different quarter from the church. I had considered and weighed with great and anxious deliberation, the bearing of the step you had recommended, upon my character and standing in the church and community. Being satisfied that the excitement spoken of by you, with such alarming apprehensions, was, so far as the church were concerned, a fiction, and therefore that the alleged ground of your advice was not the true ground; knowing that no brother had made known to me his personal dissatisfaction, and having been assured by you that no one had preferred any charge specific or general, for which he would be responsible; and, moreover, you having distinctly and repeatedly refused to call the church together, formally or informally, to hear from me or even from yourself any explanation of the alleged cause of the alleged ground of your advice; I could not think it either the course of duty, or of prudence to retire from office, by my own act, under such circumstances. Such a step, voluntarily taken, would have been bowing assent to an imputation upon my character and motives, which I could never wipe out or explain, unless, contrary to your avowed purposes, you or the church should afterwards arraign me for some enormity, which I must have already perpetrated to justify your measures. My letter of resignation, however full of protestations of innocence, sleeping upon the files of the church, would but poorly counteract before my friends and the public, the imputation implied by allowing myself to be driven under such circumstances from a sacred and responsible office in the church. If you knew of nothing in my character, which rendered me unworthy of my place, or more unworthy of it, than I was, when I was so recently promoted to it, it was a flagrant assault upon the rights and dignity of my office, for you, personally, thus to endeavor to force me from it, to say nothing of the wanton disregard of my private feelings and christian privileges. If you knew of any sufficient ground for your course, I most ardently desired to know what it was, that I might meet it then and refute or explain it. If, contrary to your professions, and I believe to your real purposes at the time, you merely wished me to depose myself from office, that you might at some future time, convenient to yourself, impeach me as a private brother for something, of which you then knew me or supposed me guilty, I had no idea of changing my position of defence. I was well situated as I was. If I was to be impeached at all for any act or acts of my life, I chose to be impeached in my high place, with the rights and dignities of the office, with which my brethren had so recently invested me by an almost unani-

mous vote, unimpaired by any act of my own. I supposed, if you had any ground for your proceedings, by remaining firm at my post, and demanding to see my accusers face to face, I should oblige you or them to stand forth and avow yourselves responsible for some specific and adequate charge. Then I could meet it, and I did not at all dread the action of my brethren of the church, with all the facts of the case before them.

Having very deliberately come to the determination not to retire voluntarily from office under the circumstances, in which I was placed, without some more adequate cause for it being adduced than I could at that time see, I availed myself of the first opportunity to make known my determination to you. You then desired to know whether I should officiate at the next communion, saying to me that it was your present opinion, if such were my purpose, you should not appoint a communion. I knew there was no ground for your affectation of alarm for an excitement in the church. The excitement you feared was not in the church; and, moreover, you knew it, or might have known it, from your own observation, as well as by the information given you by several of the brethren. Still I was disposed to yield to your false position towards me, so far as I could do it, consistently with duties of a higher and more sacred character, and, which were above and beyond the reach of any such motives as affected fear of a false and a fictitious excitement. With the intimation that you would not attempt to administer the communion if I were to officiate in my place, I told you I would let you know of my purpose seasonably. I dwelt upon this alternative, which you seemed to present, with some anxiety. I had already absented myself once from my place, in order to take and give time for deliberation, and to enable my dissatisfied brethren, if any such there were, to examine the grounds of their dissatisfaction, and condense them into some specific allegation. But I could learn nothing more specific either from you or any one else, as the reason why my officiating in my place should endanger the orderly celebration of the Lord's Supper; and I did not believe your alarm had any adequate cause, and moreover, I did not believe then and do not believe now, it was anything more than affectation in you in order "to carry the indispensable measure." The question before me was whether I should allow you, of your own motion, practically to suspend me from the discharge of the duties of my office, without any cause assigned but your own pleasure; or whether those duties did not impose an obligation upon me equally sacred with any obligations of yours, and altogether beyond your personal control. If I have any just apprehension of the respective rights of officers in the church, you were no more authorized by virtue of your office

as Pastor to approach me, as you did, than I had then or have now in virtue of my office as Deacon to assume the same attitude towards you; and request you to send me word seasonably whether you intend to preach next sabbath; and assure you, if you do, I shall, as at present advised, not have any meeting, lest there should be an excitement among the people. I felt not only my personal feelings and character trifled with by your proceedings, but the rights and dignity of my office were called in question by you, and I had a responsibility to my brethren in the office of deacon and to the churches as well as to myself.

With these impressions of what was due to myself and my office in the church, I addressed the following note to you the Saturday evening before the communion was to be appointed, that you might postpone its appointment if you thought yourself invested with that power, and chose to take the responsibility of the measure :

Rev. Dr. Thayer: Sir; I am not able to perceive any sufficient reason for forbearing the discharge of my official duties at the next communion of our church. If I am in town and am able to attend public worship, I shall officiate in my place; believing it to be a duty, which I cannot with propriety or safety to myself neglect.

Yours, respectfully,  
*Saturday afternoon, May, 26, 1832.*

JAMES G. CARTER.

You happened to be absent on an exchange, and the communion was appointed for the next sabbath. On your return, Monday morning, you addressed to me the following note.

*Monday, May 28, 1832.*

Dear Sir, On my return from Fitchburg I found your note of Saturday eve. Had I been at home yesterday, or been seasonably informed of your purpose, a meeting of the church would have been publicly appointed, that I might ask advice and direction of the brethren in relation to your case. As I must be absent till Thursday, I have addressed a note to the other Deacons informing them that there will be a church meeting on Friday next immediately after the Sacramental Lecture. I have requested them to attend; and to communicate as far as possible information of the meeting, that I may receive the advice to which I refer.

I am your christian brother,

N. THAYER.

With a view to do you full justice and to present the whole ground, I subjoin a copy of the notes addressed to each of the other deacons of the church.

*Lancaster, May 28, 1832.*

Dear Sir; On my return from Fitchburg last evening I found that late on Saturday eve a note was received from Deacon James G. Carter, informing me of his purpose "if in town and able" to officiate at the administration of the ordinance of the supper the next Lord's day. So many members of the church have expressed a desire and hope that he would not officiate under present circumstances, that I cannot take upon myself the responsibility of administering the ordinance without asking advice

and direction of the church in relation to his case. I therefore appoint a church-meeting to be holden immediately after the sacramental Lecture on Friday next. I particularly request your attendance, and that you will be so good as to communicate information of the meeting to the brethren as far as possible.

I am with sincerity your friend and christian brother,

NATHL. THAYER.

If you wished "the advice and direction of the church" upon some question relating to your own duties and course, you had a most unquestionable right to call them together to give you "advice and direction." But if you called the church together to advise me, or to sanction your advice to me, it seems to me it would have been more in the way of *your duty* to let me act upon my own responsibility in the matter. If the course I thought it my right and duty to take infringed or interfered with your rights and duties, or those of the church; then the business of the brethren was either to give you direction or to take some order themselves for your or their protection, and not to give me advice at *your* request. What new atrocity had I perpetrated, or what new circumstances had occurred which rendered it expedient or necessary to call the church together at this time, "to ask advice and direction of the brethren in relation to my case," that did not exist two or three months before, when I requested and my friends requested it, that I might have opportunity to explain the doubts and suspicions, if any such they had, that had been infused into their minds? None at all, that I know or can conceive of, except that you knew perfectly well, if I could meet the church unprejudiced and uncommitted, as to any course of action, I should have satisfied every fair mind of the purity of my motives and the integrity of my actions. By this time, with two or three months faithful drilling, you expected they were sufficiently prejudiced and excited "to accomplish the business—to carry the indispensable measure." But your eyes had been so riveted on another excitement far out of the borders of the church, that after all you mistook the temper, state of feeling, and disposition of the church, at that time, when you called them together. They were far enough in their appearance and in their actions from verifying your assertions about their excited state. Not a brother professed himself personally and on his own account dissatisfied, though every one probably believed, from your representations, the rest of his brethren were just ready to burst into a wild and consuming blaze. But as each waited for somebody who was dissatisfied to make known his feelings, nothing was said about dissatisfaction except by yourself. You, indeed, informed them they were very generally excited and dissatisfied, but I submit to you and to any observer of the proceedings of the first church meeting, if they seemed to know much about it, after all, except what you told them.

You say in your note to the other deacons, requesting them to summon a church meeting, that "so many members of the church have expressed a desire and hope that he would not officiate under present circumstances, that I cannot take upon myself the responsibility of administering the ordinance of the Lord's Supper without asking advice and direction of the church in relation to his case." I have not learned that you have even told the other deacons, what members had expressed those "desires and hopes" that I should not officiate, nor that you told them, what the "present circumstances" were that gave rise to those desires and hopes. You certainly never have given me any information, either as to the "circumstances" or the *persons*, who "desired and hoped" on account of them, that I should not officiate. I never could hear of anything more specific than a *general* excitement, without any *particular* person's being affected by it,—a *general* blaze and no *one* conscious of even being warmed by it. But the church having been called together to give *you* advice and direction, as to what *I* should do; or, if I do you injustice in stating the object of your meeting, I will give it in your own words, "to ask advice and direction of the church in relation to *his* case;" you submitted as your first proposition the following:

"That three clergymen, mutually chosen, or two clergymen and a Layman, of our own denomination, be requested to give us their advice in answer to this question: '*Is it expedient, in view of the civil action commenced by Deacon James G. Carter on account of a crime with which he was publicly accused, and in view also of the general dissatisfaction and grief of the members of this church, that he resign his office as Deacon of the Church?*'"

Premising that the *crime* which you brought in this form, first, before the church, was the slander uttered against me at the auction of books in the Town-house, to which allusion has been before made, and for which I had commenced an action to bring its utterer to justice; and premising also that I had been almost forced into that course by the attitude you immediately assumed towards me in relation to my office in the church; I ask your attention to the proposition submitted first to the brethren, who had been called together to relieve you of the individual responsibility of administering the communion, or to give *you* "advice and direction," *under the circumstances*, "in relation to my case." I think no one, either from reading your note to the other deacons, requesting them to summon a meeting of the church, or from reading your note to me, that you were about to submit a proposition for a reference of the question of *my resigning my office* to three men. But the most remarkable feature in the proceedings of that day is the nature of the question you proposed to submit to three men mutually chosen. Without waiting to see, whether the church or my-

self, who were the real parties interested in such a reference, would agree to refer the question at all, you submit in the same breath the subject matter for them to decide. So that, if either the church or myself were disposed to ask the advice of friends at all, you had prescribed and foreclosed the topic upon which the advice must be given; and we must accept or reject the whole together. But the question you proposed to submit is the most remarkable and ingenious piece of diplomatism I have witnessed recently. It only required for its complete success absolute and unmitigated stupidity in both parties to the reference. Did you suppose, could you for a moment suppose, innocent as I knew myself to be, and as you knew me to be and had pronounced me to be, of any *crime* in relation to the petty transactions of the Reading-room; and absolutely incredulous as you knew I was of the truth or reality of your alleged excitement, as the ground of your advice, that I should agree to submit a question to any persons, however chosen, which precluded, by its terms, enquiry into both those facts, and only submitted the question of expediency of resigning my office under the supposition that both were true. I am wholly unacquainted with the logic, by which you seem to infer that it is a crime to be charged with a crime. If that mode of reasoning be sound, then, indeed, the purest and most exalted character in the community is at the mercy of the malignant, depraved, and abandoned man, who may choose to accuse him. I listened to your proposition with perfect astonishment at your arrogance and presumption in submitting *such* a question, at *such* a time, and in *such* a form, to the consideration of the church, who had been called together by yourself without the request or suggestion of any members, as appears by your notes to the deacons, to advise you as to administering the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, when I proposed not to allow you, personally, to suspend me from the duties of my office; or as it would seem from your proposition, to advise *you*, what it was expedient "under the assumed circumstances," for *me* to do.

I offer no further remarks upon the proposition itself, for I cannot, and would not if I could, add any thing to its intrinsic absurdity as your first *public* act in the proceedings against me in the church. I wish just to add the reasons you assigned for submitting such a proposition at such a time. It was because you were "desirous of treating Deacon Carter with all possible tenderness, and of having your own course, and the proceedings of the church candidly and impartially examined." I pass over your peculiar way of showing tenderness, and beg to enquire of you, how three men, confined to the question you submitted, could enquire into your course, or examine candidly and impartially the proceedings of the church. The words,

"*candidly*" and "*impartially*" sound well always, but they are liable to be misused, and perhaps for the very reason that they sound so well. The referees, however candid and impartial, were precluded from examining your course by the terms of the question to be submitted to them. And those were two very valid reasons, why they could not show their candour and impartiality in examining the proceedings of the church. In the first place, they were precluded by the terms of the question to be submitted, and in the next place the church had no proceedings to be examined. They had that moment assembled, and had only had time to be informed that they were very much excited and grieved on my account.

I offered no remarks upon this proposition of yours in my "Answer," I merely stated it. But its absurdity was so apparent, that you felt the necessity of endeavoring to exonerate yourself from the folly of submitting it. Accordingly in your "Reply," you introduced the following apology for it:

"The proposition to submit to three Clergymen or to two Clergymen and a Layman the question whether it was expedient for Deacon Carter to resign his office, was offered by me with a view to *conciliate and to gratify some members of the Church*. My *PERSONAL* desire," you add, "was, that if the Church could be in harmony, *in their measures, THEY SHOULD OF THEMSELVES ACCOMPLISH THE BUSINESS!*"

The words in italics are omitted in the printed copy of your "Reply" though they appear in the certified copy, which I have in manuscript! It seems then you understood, even in this first public act, better than most of the brethren "what business was to be accomplished." No brother had suggested to me or to the church, a reference of any question, and if any one had made such a suggestion in "conversing with you" privately, it was undoubtedly with the understanding that the subject should be fairly presented. No one but yourself could have drawn a proposition to submit *such* a question as you offered; assuming as it did all the *facts* of the case, and only enquiring what it was expedient for *me* to do, under such circumstances as you chose to assume, without any examination into their truth or reality. If your offer of a reference was a conceit of your own, designed "to conciliate some brethren" by a show of fairness, and to throw the odium of refusing on me, the question you proposed to submit was well calculated to answer your purpose. For you must have known I should not agree to submit such a question, and the church would be left after all "of themselves to accomplish the business," according to your "personal desire." If it was a private suggestion of any one to refer to referees, you ought not to shift the responsibility of *such* a proposition upon him. For the question to be submitted was wholly your own. If you or the church had proposed at that

time a reference of such questions, as would have allowed an investigation into the *facts* of the case, and so that the referees might have applied their "candour" and "impartiality" to your course, as well as mine; if they could have been requested or allowed to go into the truth or reality of the alleged dissatisfaction with me, and the grounds and causes of it; I should have met the proposition most cheerfully; and think it would have been a very good way to accomplish the business, though not precisely the business you were intent upon accomplishing.

But you took especial care, that the facts of the case should be excluded not only from the cognisance of the referees proposed, but even from the members of the church themselves. For having told the church they were very much excited and grieved on account of my having been charged with a crime, you took care in the same breath to tell them, "it was not their business to investigate the truth or falsehood of the charges, that had been publicly made against me, and you hoped no such inquiry would be made by any one." "The charges," (that is, the slander uttered against me,) "were submitted to a civil tribunal and we, (the church,) were not to go into the merits of the case. It would be improper for the church to interfere with the question." I wish this position of yours to be particularly borne in mind, for its consistency with some of your subsequent acts. This was certainly a strange state of things. A deacon of the church, who had recently been invested with the title, dignity, and responsibility of his office against his inclination, by the almost unanimous voice of his brethren, is *accused*, no matter by whom, somebody not of the church, of "plundering" books. As the only means of exposing the wanton malignity of the charge, a civil action had been commenced against the slanderer. Would any one be prepared for the scene before us? The Pastor and the church immediately fall upon their slandered deacon and attempt to drive him out of office; carefully and studiously shutting their eyes against all the facts or merits of the case! This was precisely my situation the moment you tendered your advice to me to resign, and it was my situation, at the first church meeting, June 1. It is with pain, and not without a feeling of the horror I experienced at the moment, that I state the fact; but it is a fact, and, therefore, should be stated in this connexion, as illustrating your proceedings; that you, with your accustomed solemnity of manner and apparent earnestness, invoked light from above to guide the church, and a spirit of charity to characterize their proceedings; and then on bringing the business before the church, carefully withheld facts, within your personal knowledge, which would have entirely, by your own previous admission, exculpated me and "put my enemies completely in the wrong." And



moreover you told the church it would be improper, and you hoped no one would inquire into the truth or falsehood of the *crime*, with which I had been publicly accused. It was no matter of surprise to me, that your "prayers for light and a blessing" were not miraculously answered, while you studiously refused the necessary means of obtaining them.

Having submitted *your* proposition for a reference as above; for which purpose the church meeting was *not* called, you subsequently stated the purpose for which it was called, viz: "To ask advice and direction of the brethren, 'whether in the present state of things in our relation to Deacon James G. Carter, and a knowledge of the feelings and opinions of many members of the church, it is expedient and proper that he officiate at the approaching celebration of the Lord's Supper?'"

It is not very clear, either from your note to the other deacons to call the church meeting, or from the above statement of its purpose, what in particular you wanted of the church. Did you want them to advise you, as would appear by your note to the deacons, whether to celebrate the ordinance of the Supper "in the present state of things?" If this was your purpose originally, you did not bring it before the church in opening the meeting. Did you want them to advise *you* whether I ought to officiate in my place, or to authorize you to forbid my discharging my duties? If this were your purpose, and any such order had been taken, I should have asked you, by what authority as Pastor, or my brethren, by what authority, as members of the church, they approached me in my office in such a manner. I was yet and am still unaccused in the church, and I should have insisted upon knowing *why* the Pastor and the church assumed such an attitude towards me. I should have said, make your charges, impeach me, and I will join issue with you and put myself upon trial. *Then* I should think it both expedient and proper to abstain not only from my official duties, but from the communion till an investigation of the charges. I should not have needed your advice or the advice of my brethren to point out the propriety of my course. Or did you want them to *sanction your advice to me to resign my office in the present state of things*. This purpose you did not at this meeting very distinctly avow; at least you did not ask the church to act upon the subject. What was "the present state of things in our relation to Deacon James G. Carter," however obscure and unintelligible it must have been to the church at that time, I think will be now very well understood by any one, who has read thus far in my letter. I thought I understood it pretty well then, and I have yet seen no cause to change my view. It is also quite apparent that the "knowledge of the feelings and opinions of many members of the church," which

rendered it a question, whether I should officiate, or not, was chiefly, if not wholly, confined to yourself.

I did little more at this church-meeting than to observe your proceedings. I simply invoked from my brethren, as respectfully as I could, a charitable construction of my motives and actions. I entreated their forbearance in proceedings so calculated, in my then present circumstances, to prejudice me, yet uncondemned and even unaccused in the church, in the community of which we formed a part. If I was the occasion of grief or dissatisfaction to any member of the church I professed my sorrow for it; and respectfully and affectionately called upon the aggrieved members of the church, if any such there were, to make known to me the cause of their grief. And I professed my readiness to hear them and obviate them, or to give my brethren such satisfaction as the circumstances required. More than one brother reiterated my request that my accusers, if I had any, should stand forth and state the grounds of their dissatisfaction. No one professed himself even dissatisfied. The only evidence I had of excitement and dissatisfaction was from yourself. I requested the church to discuss the matter fully and freely; and informed them that lest my presence might possibly restrain perfect freedom in discussion, I should retire from the meeting. Accordingly I left the house.

Your record of the meeting says, after considerable discussion, "it was voted that this meeting be adjourned on condition that Deacon James G. Carter will abstain from his official duties on the next Lord's Day." And "that a committee was chosen to confer with Deacon James G. Carter and ascertain whether he will comply with the condition, on which the preceding vote was passed." Now either your record does not truly represent the proceedings of the church, or the committee, who waited upon me, did not do their errand. I feel the less delicacy in calling in question your records, because they were not made in any instance I believe in church-meeting, and your memory, especially where your feelings are much interested, is no more likely to be accurate a few hours, a few days, or a few weeks, afterwards, than my memory or the memory of any body else equally cognisant of the facts. I understand your record to convey the idea that my abstaining to officiate, was an indispensable condition, on which the church would vote to adjourn. If I had refused to comply with the condition, the church would not have adjourned, at least, without passing some more decisive vote to prevent my officiating. If I had supposed my brethren capable of passing such a vote at that time, or that they had passed such a vote, when the committee called upon me, I certainly should not have complied with the condition. Because I had heard no individual complaint, had not been in-

peached, or accused by any one, and I should not have acceded to the terms, if I had supposed the committee approached me in behalf of the church in such an attitude to begin with. I should have refused such terms, in the hope, if for no other purpose, of bringing out my accusers, or compelling you to admit the fact publicly that I had none.

The committee were gentlemen of candor, and were the last individuals in the church, who would have taken a step to injure me or prejudice my cause. And if they had understood the commission, as you have represented it, they would not have accepted it. Besides, one of the committee, and the one, who stated the object of the call to me, made the motion in the church to choose the committee; and undoubtedly, he knew at least as well as you could know a day or two afterwards, what he meant by it. He certainly did not state any such alternative to me as you present in your record. He said the church did not appear to be ready to act. They wished for time for consideration before they took any steps. They did not appear to possess the information necessary to act. They wanted time to converse together and get such information as would enable them to act understandingly. As a means of giving the time, which the church seemed to need and desire, without either compromising them or myself as to the course we should, severally, thereafter pursue, the committee enquired if I should be willing to abstain from the discharge of my official duties at communion the next Lord's day. To such an enquiry, made for such purposes, made by my friends, and in such kind and respectful terms, with no appearance of any thing worse in reserve, if I should not answer as they wished, I most cheerfully answered affirmatively.

Your record, if I understand it, represents the church as being ready on their part, then, to take some decisive step. They granted an adjournment without taking that step, only for appearance sake or to gratify me or my friends. It is only in this sense, that I mean to impeach it and prove that it is not a true record. In the sense of presenting me with a *condition* on which the church would adjourn, I think I have shown that it could not be true. You had committed yourself in the question in the outset when you advised me to resign, and it hence became very important to you that the church should sustain you by their acts. You thought they were ready to act now, but you found yourself mistaken. More arguments or rather more authority was wanting, and having found your own weight insufficient to produce action in the church, you endeavoured, after I left the meeting, to add the sanction and weight of "numerous distinguished Clergymen," whom you professed to have consulted during election week. You stated to the church that

you had taken the advice of several distinguished Clergymen during your absence, and it was the unanimous opinion, that I ought immediately to resign. What sort of a case you made out in your consultations with clergymen during election week, I shall probably never know. But if this letter ever reaches their eyes, they will know how truly you presented the facts, when you asked their advice upon them. How you could represent the case so as to produce the unanimous opinion that I ought immediately to resign, without slandering me most wantonly, I am at a loss to conceive. Do you think that was a fair and honorable method to influence the minds of my brethren to take a step deeply affecting the rights and dignity of my office, and most injuriously prejudicing my character in the church and community? Do you think it was consistent with the clerical character? If you do, I assure you, that according to your notions, that would be very fair, and honorable, and consistent in a minister of religion, which would be very unfair, dishonorable, and disgraceful in a man of no such pretensions.

But the church, after all, were not ready to sanction your advice. Even though you informed them, that the circumstance of my being in office kept many respectable and excellent characters from joining the church; they either did not believe your representations, or they were not disposed to take the fact largely into account in determining whether I ought to go out of office. For no one professed dissatisfaction with me, and I much doubt if the brethren generally would have known they were so excited and grieved, if you had not first informed them of the facts. Even Major Locke, at this meeting, had not learned that he himself was dissatisfied. It ought to be stated, however, as an apology for his ignorance, that you had been out of town nearly all the week, previous to the meeting. If you had been at home, I venture to say, he would have been better informed;—at least, that he would not have betrayed his ignorance in so public a manner. Major Locke stood up in his place, and declared undoubtedly the real feelings of his heart; and they do equal honor to his magnanimity, and his christian character. He said, that “although he was not originally in favor of Deacon Carter’s election to the office, still he had acquiesced in it and never meant to make any difficulty. For his own part he should be content to receive the elements from the hands of Deacon Carter as long as he lived.” Now how is your assertion, made more than two months ago, and reiterated every time I had seen you mean time, as to the excitement and dissatisfaction in the church being so great as to endanger the orderly celebration of the Lord’s Supper, sustained by the facts of the case. I had ascertained the views and feelings of Deacon Lane in regard to me distinctly, *after*

your advice had been tendered and the cause for it assigned. He was not excited and had not heard of any excitement in the church. He was not dissatisfied with me as an officer in the church and knew of no one that was. Major Locke's feelings upon the subject are fully expressed above. Upon whom did you rely, if not upon these two brethren, to be ready to verify your allegation at any time? These two brethren had acted so far consistently and honorably upon the principle, you assured me they adopted, when I came into office. They acquiesced. And their acquiescence seemed perfectly cordial and unreserved. And you cannot refer to them for making true your assertion about general dissatisfaction and grief among the brethren. You have adduced no evidence whatever to sustain your assertion, and I have seen none adduced by any body else; and I do not believe it was true. You could not have known it was true; and I cannot conceive of your believing it was true yourself; unless you have the faculty of believing without evidence.

The church meeting of June 1, was adjourned, the *condition*, as you say, having been complied with on my part, to June 29. I was called upon to take but little part in this meeting, and had nothing to do, but to observe and record your proceedings as they came under my inspection. I attended to that business carefully. I shall, however, in noticing the proceedings of this second meeting, pass very slightly over two topics, as superfluous evidence in the case. Though, if I had no other evidence, they would of themselves be conclusive to show the feelings and spirit with which you entered into this controversy, and the principles of action and means, by which you have "accomplished the business." One topic is, the manner, in which you noticed "our brother, on whose account we are assembled," in your prayer. You prayed that "he might have divine light and assistance to guide him to a proper sense of his situation, and to a wise conclusion *as to his course*." You treated me throughout your prayer, as if I were guilty and obdurate, when I had not even been accused in the church. This mode of producing conviction of my guilt in the minds of my brethren, and of preparing them to sustain your course, was certainly well calculated to accomplish the business. But your success in accomplishing the business has not obliterated from my mind the means by which it was accomplished.

The other topic is, the manner in which you made welcome spectators to this scene in the church. Notice of the meeting having been given by *ringing the bell*, the proceedings were early interrupted by the coming into the gallery of several persons not of the church, some I believe not of the society, all particularly hostile to me. These and others in sympathy with

them constituted the real blaze!—the real excitement which you were endeavoring to appease by my sacrifice. It was a scene, they wished to witness, and you wished to have them gratified. A motion was made to exclude them, upon the ground that the proceedings of the church, at least in this stage of the business, should be in the church, by themselves, and not public. Some conversation having taken place upon the delicacy and propriety of spectators being present, and the right of the church to exclude them; you apparently settled the question, by saying with a voice elevated louder than was necessary to be heard by the brethren, who were assembled around you, but not louder than was necessary to be heard by your new allies in conducting the business of the church in the distant gallery; “*I trust, we have no secrets in the church!*” “As the motion is not seconded I shall proceed with reading the record!” The only two topics connected with this meeting which I deem it important for me to dwell upon, are, 1st, the manner in which you brought the *new business* before the church, with the reasons you assigned to induce the church to sustain your cause; and, 2d, your essentially altering a motion regularly made and seconded when you put the question from the chair. The *new business*, to which I allude, was introduced according to your record thus: “The record of the proceedings of the last meeting being read, THE PASTOR requested the church to take into consideration and decide on the advice HE HAD GIVEN Deacon James G. Carter TO RESIGN HIS OFFICE as deacon of the church.” So you passed over your diplomatic proposition for a reference, made on opening the first meeting, though it had not been acted upon or noticed, and introduced this new subject for the consideration and decision of the church. How well prepared the brethren were, to consider and decide upon this question not presented as the business of the meeting, of which this was an adjournment; or whether they had received information from you privately of what they were to be called upon to consider, I am not informed. They certainly had no information officially or regularly.

Your advice had been given more than three months! I had maturely considered it, and had declined to follow it; assigning my reasons to you for my decision. Did you wish the church merely to say your advice was good advice, without giving any other reasons for it than you had given? Their endorsing it would not change its character, nor invalidate the reasons for which I had declined to take it. But my office was not yet vacated;—and something must be done to accomplish the business. Although you had adduced all the reasons you could, at the preceding meeting, to show that your advice was very good, you did not dare, then, seeing the temper and feel-

ings of the church, to ask the brethren to decide upon it. In a month you hoped some progress had been made in convincing the church of their excited state! You brought your advice before them now, boldly, and distinctly, and urged the most weighty motives you could to induce them to endorse and sanction it. You said to the church as you had said at the previous meeting, and as you said subsequently in your "Reply," and have published it to the world with your signature, that "the circumstance that Deacon Carter was an officer in the church had been the means of deterring respectable and excellent individuals from offering themselves for admission to our communion." You presumed that the brethren remembered what you told them at the last meeting,—how unanimous the opinion of the distinguished clergymen, was, whom you had consulted during election week. And to turn the scale, and produce perfect conviction in the church that it was their desire I should resign, you threw yourself with all your weight into the side with your advice. You stated to the church, that although you had probably done many things wrong in the course of your life, you had, yet, seen no cause to regret the course you had taken towards me. You said you wished the church to express an opinion as to the course you had taken, particularly, as to the advice you had given me to resign my office. "I wish the church to say, whether they will sustain me in my course or not." "If I have done wrong," you added, "I wish to be put upon a review of my conduct."

By this manner of bringing the *new business* before the church, you certainly placed them in a dilemma. They felt as if they must choose *that day*, whom they would serve. If they "sustained you," they must endeavor to vacate my office; if they did not sustain you, they would "put you upon a review of your conduct." You know the means you had privately taken to bring the church to confirm your advice; you knew the respect they would pay to the opinion of distinguished clergymen; and above all you knew your own personal authority and influence with them. You knew they would choose almost any alternative sooner than send their venerated Pastor, like a penitent, to "review his conduct."

Having *thus* brought the business before the church and argued the cause, you inquired if they were ready for the question. No motion had been made to be sure; but forgetting for the moment that you were not the whole church, you stated the question to be on concurring with you in the advice you had given Deacon James G. Carter to resign his office, and actually was proceeding to put the question thus; Brethren, if it be agreeable to your minds to concur with me, in the advice I have given Deacon James G. Carter to resign his office;—when

seeming to recollect yourself you stopped and said; Brethren, the business is before you; what course will you take? Deacon Lane, who had by this time, probably, been better informed of his state of feeling towards me, rose and said, we seem to be getting into a very "unpleasant situation." And after a few more remarks he said, with a view to try the minds of the church or to bring the business before them, he would move, that Deacon Carter "*be requested to suspend the duties of his office.*" Deacon Lane had had a conversation with a brother at the door of the church before the meeting was opened upon the subject, who had suggested to him that the best way of extricating the church from their embarrassment would be, "to request Deacon Carter to suspend the performance of his duties till after the trial of his civil action," and that he had no doubt I should accede to the request. Deacon Lane seemed to entertain the suggestion favorably. He entered the church, and after your argument, offered his motion exactly as I have stated it above. I was sitting before him and wrote it down as he made it. The motion being seconded, you proceeded to put the question thus: "It is moved and seconded that Deacon James G. Carter be requested to *RESIGN his office*. As many brethren as are in favor of requesting Deacon Carter to *RESIGN his office*;"—I rose, before the question was called for, and pointed out the difference between the motion made and the one stated from the chair. I used exactly, or very nearly, the following words: "Rev. Sir, the motion put is not the one made. The motion made was, that I be requested to *suspend the duties of my office*—and the motion put is, that I be requested to *resign my office*—as deacon. There is a wide difference between the motion made and the one put." You then said "I will ask brother Lane to explain." And without giving him time to speak, you added; "Did not you mean to resign?" Deacon Lane, perceiving that he had mistaken *your* wishes, though he had undoubtedly expressed his own, very hesitatingly said, with a bow of acquiescence—"Why-y-yes." The question was then put by you as before, and was declared to be a vote.

On this evidence, which can be substantiated in a court of law, I affirm, that while presiding in the church by virtue of your office as Pastor, you essentially changed a motion in a material and important point on stating it from the chair; and being detected on the spot, you asked your aged and devoted friend a *leading question* to make him explain according to your wishes. The evidence of the conversation at the door with Deacon Lane, and the evidence of the individuals, who sat around him and heard his words as he stated his motion, are conclusive to show, that he made the motion as I have stated it above. The facts of his not being more than ten feet from you,



and of his looking you full in the face as he spoke, are pretty conclusive that you could not have *misunderstood* his words. For the words, *suspend*, and *resign*, do not sound so much alike as to be easily mistaken for each other. Besides, to request Deacon Carter to *suspend the duties of his office* did not fully "sustain your cause." The business you brought before the meeting and all your arguments and authority, had gone to a point beyond,—to the length of vacating my office. And you could not think of being left with such equivocal support, with your course but half sustained. You would be obliged to "review your conduct."

These facts being true, I leave you to explain their consistency with your record of the proceedings of the meeting. If you cannot show them to be either untrue or to be consistent with your record, as I am sure you cannot, then it follows that your record of an important vote in the church is false and spurious! As far as any negative can be proved by positive testimony, I could show that no vote passed the church in the form you have recorded it. That particular form of it was conceived afterwards, and put thus, to meet a state of things out of doors, which it would detain me too long more particularly to explain. If you ever wish for more light and evidence upon what I mean by a state of things out of doors, it shall be furnished cheerfully.

The church having voted to *request me to resign my office*, or in other words, to endorse and sanction your advice, or to sustain your course, so that you need not be obliged to "review your conduct," you turned to me and said, "you have heard the vote which has just passed, are you ready to give your answer?" "No, Sir; I am not ready," I replied. "In a matter involving, as this question does, every thing that is dear to me on earth, I have a right to take time for deliberation. I will give my answer, in person, if the church will adjourn to any time convenient to themselves, not less than a fortnight." A motion having been made to adjourn for a fortnight, for the purpose of hearing my answer, you asked me before disposing of it, if I "could not give my answer this afternoon, if the church would adjourn for half an hour." I said, "No, Sir." You seemed very anxious that I should give my answer now, upon the spot, and very unwilling the business should take any other course. The motion to adjourn was seconded and sustained by a few pertinent remarks from another brother. You said the multiplication of meetings would lead to evil, and wished my answer might be given this afternoon, observing that the subject was not new to me. I replied, this form of it is, entirely, new. Still, if the church will not indulge me with any time for deliberation, and insist upon an answer on the spot, I will give

them *an answer*. Your course was so obviously unreasonable that the church did not in that particular sustain you. But they granted the time I asked to make my answer to their vote, requesting me to resign my office. I have done with the second church meeting.

At the third church meeting, held by adjournment, July 13, to hear my answer, you will recollect, we had a much more numerous audience of spectators in the galleries, but a much less number of the church below, than we had at the former meeting. Your excited and blazing church out of doors had got the ascendancy over your peaceable and quiet church within. Some members of the church had perceived that they were made the instruments of, to carry on, or as you hoped, to decide, a controversy between me and certain persons out of the church. And so perceiving their situation and that of the church, they determined; and one, if no more, avowed his determination, to have no more to do with the business, and wholly abstained from taking any part in the proceedings of the church. This feeling, entertained by many members of the church, accounts for there being only two thirds as many present at this meeting as were present at the previous meeting; while the cordial welcome to witness our proceedings you gave to your friends and allies out of doors, by telling them "*we had no secrets in the church*," accounts for the great increase of spectators, in the galleries. I did not however personally, and on my own account object to the presence of the spectators at this time, since they had been admitted before, and I had the floor to-day.

In the words of your record, "Deacon James G. Carter, being requested, made a communication to the Church, in reply to their vote at the preceding meeting, by which *he was requested to resign his office* as deacon of the church." I am glad to correct your former record of the same vote of the church by your record at a subsequent meeting. And by it, in connexion with what I have said before, I show that you did not put the motion as made, nor record the vote as it passed, even after you had shaped it to suit yourself. The communication I made to the church was designed to give my brethren my reasons for declining to comply with their request. It was termed my "Answer," and has been before referred to, and quoted from, in the preceding pages.

Having stated the reasons, which had influenced me to the decision I had given, I concluded the communication with my solemn and emphatic protest against such proceedings in the church, in the following paragraph:

"In conclusion, I must repeat the sentiment I expressed at the passage of this vote, which has been the occasion of the meeting, and the subject of my remarks. I am perfectly astonished! I am astonished at the time

—the matter—and the manner of these public proceedings against me in the church. My friends and brethren, pause—I entreat you—I entreat you by every motive I can address to your understanding—to pause—and consider, what is the bearing of these proceedings not only upon me, but more especially upon this church and the church at large. Are they reasonable—and are they right? I think they are not reasonable, and are not right; and therefore I do protest against them—I protest against them in the face of the church, as injurious and disgraceful to them. I protest against them, most solemnly protest, in the face of Heaven, whatever may be the motives of the instigator, or the instigators of them, as irregular, according to congregational usage, unscriptural—tyrannical—overbearing—and unjust.”

My communication having been read, I requested the church and made a motion to that effect, which was seconded, to enter my answer upon the records. You said you hoped no such paper would be directed to be put upon the records, while you had the care of them. I urged it as a matter of mere justice. I stated that the former proceedings of the church were matter of record, and the vote to which my communication was an answer was matter of record, and I claimed to have the same degree of permanency given to it as had been given to the other papers, which purported to show the other side of the case. The brother who seconded my motion urged similar reasons in support of it. He said he understood the reasons, or apologies, or your propositions were matter of record, and he thought my answer should go with them. You said it was not so. They were not matter of record. You were asked, what is the record of those propositions then? You held up the slip of paper, from which you read them, and said this is the only record. You had sent me at my request, several weeks before, copies of those same propositions regularly certified with your name as “a true copy of the propositions submitted to the church,” not as a true copy of or from the Records. But when your printed pamphlet appeared, I observed with astonishment that they had somehow become “matter of record”! *When* it was determined to put them upon record, and *when* they were transferred to the records, does not appear. Neither does it appear that my communication accompanied them on their passage to the “Records.”

Upon your assertion that your propositions with their reasons were not matter of record, and upon a motion being made to put my answer just read on “File,” I allowed you to thrust my motion aside and put the subsequent motion first. I did not wish greater respect shown to my communication, or a greater degree of permanency given to it, by the church, than was given to the other papers of the case. Before the business of disposing of my answer was settled, and while I was urging its being put upon record, I stated as a reason for it, that if the manuscript went out of my hands, I wished the church to take

possession of it ; that I might have an opportunity to consult it or refer to it, hereafter, if occasion should occur. I had passed the manuscript into your hands as I finished reading it, and I perceived that while you meant to retain it, you did not intend the church should take possession of it, by any act of theirs, so as to place it beyond your individual control ! I had no idea of having such a disposition made of it, and claimed to have it returned to me, unless the church entered it upon record. For I was ignorant then of any distinction between *records* and *files*. You held it in both your hands trembling with agitated feelings, and said, when I spoke of having it returned to me, "The church have possession of it !" Upon the explanation of my brother, who made the motion to place it upon the 'Files,' that it was the custom of the Church to record only the principal votes and place the voluminous papers upon file, I was satisfied with that disposition of it, and the vote passed in the affirmative without further remarks.

In recording that vote you say: "Voted, that the communication of Deacon James G. Carter and *all the papers* and records relating to the case be placed on file, to be at the disposal of the church." This vote, as you have recorded it, shows that there were some other papers *then*, with which mine was to be placed on file. But now it turns out that all the other papers relating to the case that had then come before the church, have been sly enough to slip out from the strap that held them on file and creep into the book of records; while my stupid manuscript was so unambitious, or did not know any better than to remain "on file." It is, however, past my comprehension to understand from your language after all, your idea of the difference between "*records*" and "*files*." In the vote I have just quoted from you, it appears, that my communication and the papers and *records* are to be put upon *file*. So far as appears from your language, *records* are on *file*, and *files* are on *record*, just as happens to be convenient. Practically, I understand your distinction perfectly. It means that papers, and records, and files change places or take just that place which best suits your present purpose.

My answer having been read and disposed of, I supposed the business of the meeting was transacted. It was the only business for which the church adjourned; and the only business you brought before the meeting of which it was an adjournment, was, "to take into consideration and decide on the advice you had given Deacon James G. Carter to resign his office as a Deacon of the church." The church had *considered* the subject; at least, they had *decided* on your advice, and passed a vote, at your earnest solicitation, sanctioning and approving it. Any one, looking for only that degree of regulari-

ty, accuracy, and fairness, which characterizes the proceedings of all organized bodies of men, whether a town-meeting, a district school-meeting, or even a political caucus, would suppose the business of the meeting was transacted. But the proceedings of a church of Christ in so grave and important a matter as interfering with the sacred and responsible office of deacon, and essentially affecting the character and standing of a christian brother, it seems, were to be conducted with less ceremony. Having made your remarks, which I shall more particularly notice by and by, in reply to my communication, you waited and looked round as though something more was to be done. MAJ. LOCKE, perceiving that the time for his part had come, slowly rose;—Maj. Locke! who at the first meeting of the church renewed his declaration of acquiescence to my being in office, and said he should make no difficulty, but was "content to receive the elements from the hands of Deacon Carter as long as he lived! !" When Major Locke met with this sudden change in his mind, and by what means it was wrought, I cannot, and *need not inform you*. If it was not miraculous, you undoubtedly know the means of his conversion to your views. Major Locke said there certainly must be dissatisfaction in the church, or it never would have been called together! The attendance of the church is proof that they are dissatisfied!! Without stopping to see how such evidence would affect the question, there being but two thirds as many members at this meeting, as attended the one before, when the business of the meeting was first announced to them, I proceed with Major Locke's remarks. He said, "it appears Deacon Carter is going to force his services upon the church." Not so, certainly; I only wished to force the church, or the Pastor, to explain their extraordinary course in relation to me, and state their charges specifically if they had any thing against me, as the ground of their public proceedings. Major Locke continued, "he should be sorry to wound the feelings of Deacon Carter, as much as he had wounded his feelings and the feelings of the church; but as the church has power to *choose* their officers, so they have power to *depose* them: I move, that Deacon Carter be removed from his office as Deacon." The motion was seconded, put, and declared to be a vote, without further remarks, preamble, or ceremony.

The extraordinary power assumed by the church by this vote, I shall in another part of my letter more fully examine; I wish here only to state the facts as they occurred with such remarks as may make them understood. Major Locke, besides meeting with a sudden change in his views, must have been studying *your Platform* upon the power of churches to remove their deacons. Or at least, I think he must have had your exposition of

it, or he would not, *impromptu*, have evinced such an intimacy with church polity, as to quote the very words of the Platform upon a topic lying rather out of the sphere of his ordinary occupations, studies, and duties. His reading or your explanation of the Platform, however, must have been very partial or superficial, as I shall by and by show, or even he must have known better than to have offered such a motion for such a cause assigned. The motion having passed into a vote of the church, without remark or debate, I rose in my place and protested, again, against the proceedings, and "proposed to the church to join me in a mutual council to review the proceedings of the church against me." You entered at once into an argument to convince your church that they had the power I called in question, and vindicated the regularity of your and their proceedings. You told the brethren that "the church was in this matter an independent body, that they had a right to elect their deacons and they had a right to depose them; that I was deprived of no church privileges and had no cause of grievance, which could make it necessary to call a council." I could give more details of your remarks, but it is unnecessary. Having concluded your remarks, without calling upon the church, as was obviously your duty, to consider my proposition for a mutual council, or even waiting to see if they would consider it, you proceeded or were proceeding to other business,—to dissolve the meeting;—when I rose and stated to the church, "that I should at some future time, convenient to myself, renew the proposition for a council, which had been so irregularly thrust aside by the moderator."

The meeting was forthwith *dissolved*; "the business being accomplished,"—"the indispensable measure" being carried. Whether the fact of carrying the measure so amply sustains your course as to prevent your reviewing your conduct, I leave with you and the public to decide. I pass over the scene of loud exultation,—of shaking of hands,—and of giving and receiving congratulations among your new friends, my enemies, which took place in the porch of the church, as the brethren were retiring after the dissolution of the meeting. If you did not yourself shake hands in token of joy upon this brilliant achievement of dismissing one of your deacons from office, you gave a sympathetic and benignant smile upon those of your friends who did. I have no farther remark at present to offer upon the proceedings of this meeting, except what relates to your record of it. I am tired of noticing your management as recording officer of the church, but I cannot pass over your record of this vote without a single remark—the management so happily illustrates your fairness in your office as Pastor of a christian church. The vote purporting to remove me from

office having been declared, you were requested to announce the affirmative votes, in the same manner as when the vote passed, "that it is the desire of this church (21 brethren voting in the affirmative,) that Deacon James G. Carter resign his office as deacon." You counted as you did before, and said that there were thirteen affirmative votes. But in making your record you forgot to do as you did before, to insert the number of affirmative votes thus: "Voted (13 *brethren voting in the affirmative*), that Deacon James G. Carter be removed from office."— Why should the number be stated in one case more than in the other? The copy of your record of this vote, which you sent me at my request soon afterwards, stands thus: "On motion, voted that Deacon James G. Carter be removed from his office as Deacon of the church.\*"

Voted; that this meeting be dissolved:

Attest NATHANIEL THAYER, PASTOR.

A true copy of the records on the files of the church,

Attest NATHANIEL THAYER, PASTOR."

On comparing my manuscript record, certified as above, with your printed record, it appears, that this precious piece of information, that you had found out somehow after the meeting was dissolved, that two hands were not seen by you at the meeting, you first entered as a private memorandum in the form of a note to the records of the church. Then by some unaccountable elasticity in the paper on which you make records, your private memorandum slipped into the body of the record above your signature, "a true copy of the records on the files of the church, attest NATHANIEL THAYER, PASTOR, and even above the vote to adjourn the meeting. So that "Attest Nathaniel Thayer, Pastor," now vouches for the whole, private memorandum and all.

At the meeting of the church when I was elected to office, you informed me, if I recollect rightly, there were thirty two members present, and thirty gave their votes for me. At the meeting, when the church voted as you say, "that it is the desire of this church that Deacon James G. Carter resign his office," there were thirty two members present, and twenty-one voted affirmatively. Whereas at the meeting when the vote was passed purporting to remove me from my office, there were but twenty two present, and you declared thirteen voted affirmatively. And afterwards, you found out somehow, I

\* "N. B. At the time the above vote was passed a declaration was made that thirteen brethren had voted affirmatively. Facts, which have since come to my knowledge, prove that the hands of two brethren were not perceived by the Pastor, and that there were fifteen affirmative votes."

do not know how, that there were two hands in the church at the time, "not perceived by the Pastor." You do not tell us whether these two hands *were raised at the time* or designed by their owners to be counted. Or whether you found two persons after the meeting; who did not vote at the time, but were willing to hold up their hands *then* in their fields to oblige you on a question taken in the church some days before in their presence, upon the question of removing a deacon from office. If you ever have occasion to speak of these two hands again, I hope you will at least tell us whether they were raised at the time or not, even if you say nothing of your right by such means to change the records of the church.

The question taken at the second meeting was obviously no expression of the personal dissatisfaction of the twenty one who voted to sanction your advice and request me to resign. Because some of those who thus voted, professed previously on the same day and subsequently, their own personal satisfaction, and they entertain the same views now. They voted affirmatively as the best means of getting over the difficulties; or in other words to extricate you from your embarrassing attitude. No wonder then, if in a church of above fifty resident male members, if I am not mistaken, *only thirteen* could be found after all the blaze and excitement, and your solicitations to vote for your measure of vacating my office, you should feel some anxiety to swell the number, even but two!! Perceiving the extreme necessity of your case, and with my experience of your dexterity in managing "Files" and "Records," it was no matter of surprise to me to witness your ingenious efforts to add a little to your show of strength. I leave you to settle with our church and the churches at large, the propriety and right in you as recording officer to ride about town and pick up what you choose to say is evidence sufficient to change the face of their records on a question deeply and personally interesting to you, without at least consulting the brethren and letting them judge of your evidence. I have done with the third meeting and with your record of its proceedings.

The next church meeting was held July 22, no notice of the meeting having been given. At this meeting you made your written communication to the church and requested them to vote to place it on file *as a reply* to my communication. Whether your communication is a reply to mine will depend, I presume, more upon its intrinsic character than upon the vote of the church, that it is so. I am the more particular to notice the phraseology in your record of this transaction, because you evidently mean to convey the idea that the church sanctioned and adopted it with all its statements and pronounced it a reply. Besides in the manuscript copy which I have, certified by you,



you call the document a "Reply to the communication made by Deacon James G. Carter to the church on July 13, 1832, communicated and **ADOPTED** July 22d, 1832." What you mean by *adopting* your Reply, unless it be, sanctioning the statements therein contained, and endorsing them as correct and true, I am at a loss to conceive. If that is what you mean to convey, I should like to be informed whether the church took any order by which they any more *adopted* your reply than they adopted my answer, when they voted to put that upon file. This transaction, whether it is to be regarded as *adopting* your communication, or whether it is a simple vote to place it on file, is differently certified in my manuscript copy and in the printed copy. In the copy in my possession the certificate is thus: "A true copy of the record on *the files* of the church, Attest NATHL. THAYER, PASTOR;" whereas in the printed copy before the public it is certified, "A true copy *from the records*, Attest NATHL. THAYER, PASTOR." On asking the church to put your manuscript, that is your reply, upon file, you say in your prefatory remarks *it embodies the remarks verbally made by you on hearing my answer*. I have had so much of double and equivocal meaning to unravel, that I choose to be charitable here, and to presume that you do not mean to convey the idea, that your reply *embodies every topic, and no other topics*, than were contained in your verbal statement on hearing my answer. If you disavow this charitable construction of your meaning, which to be sure takes away all motive for saying any thing about embodying your verbal remarks, I could show that you have embodied in your reply much, which those who set near you did not hear in your remarks, and have omitted much, which they did hear, besides giving a very different shape to several topics, really touched upon in both.

So many points in your "Reply" have been already noticed in their relation to events reviewed in the order of time, in former parts of my letter, that I shall not long dwell upon it here. It will be but justice to you in the few remarks I have to offer upon it to allow you to state in your own words, your objects and motives in making the communication to the church.

"Brethren of the church; the communication recently made by Deacon James G. Carter to this church *must have been perceived to be chiefly a personal accusation of our Brother Ezra Sawyer and myself*. As it is directed by a vote, that that communication be placed on file, and as it will of course be subject to inspection at any future period, I request as a favor that this may accompany it. *I consider it due to myself, to our brother who is also accused, to the church, and to the cause and interests of religion.*"

Your *object*, then, is to defend yourself and our brother Ezra Sawyer from what you assume to be a personal accusation from me. And your motives are to do justice to yourself, to

brother Sawyer, to the church, and to the cause and interest of religion. I wish every member of our church and every person who takes an interest in this controversy to keep this professed object and these professed motives in mind, and read through your Reply; and ask themselves how well you have accomplished your object, and how fully you have developed your avowed motives.

You assume to begin with, that my answer, "is chiefly a personal accusation of our brother Ezra Sawyer and yourself." I thought I had a very different object in view when I wrote that answer. The church requested me to resign my office, and I meant in that communication to state the reasons, which determined me not to comply with their request. I did not profess to accuse you and brother Sawyer; on the contrary, I disclaimed being the accuser of any one, in the following unequivocal words. "I have not yet become the accuser of any one." Seeing, then, that I professed so very different an object from that of accusing you and brother Sawyer, I think you ought, if you were determined to consider my answer to the church as an accusation of yourself, to have stated specifically what you thought I accused you of. I did not mean to accuse you, and I did not accuse you. On the contrary, I avoided alluding to you personally wherever I could, and forbore exposing every part of the inconsistency and irregularity of your course, as I think you will by this time begin to perceive, wherever I could do it, consistently with my right and duty to assign to the church my reasons for not complying with their request. I made a minute narrative of facts extending through fourteen closely printed pages, embracing or running through several years of time. I did not state general and equivocal propositions, which might mean anything, everything, or nothing. I did not shun dates, persons, or any other means, by which my facts might be refuted if they were not true—strictly and literally true. I felt obliged to state such a narrative of facts, with the view to show the church the grounds of my decision, and how utterly unreasonable was the position they had assumed towards me. If such facts as I was obliged to state for such a purpose,—a purpose, certainly not of my seeking but imposed upon me by the church with a necessity, which I could not evade nor resist, incidentally displayed some small part of your conduct in the premises, it was not my fault; nor am I to be blamed for it. It was your misfortune that the facts were true, and that they had become necessary for my preservation and self defence. In as much, then, as I expressly disclaimed being the accuser of you or any body else, you were bound upon every principle of fairness, if you chose to consider yourself accused, to state what the accusation was and meet it fairly

and plainly. Or if my facts looked you in the face rather more boldly than was agreeable to you, you ought to have made your war upon them, and let me personally alone. At least you should have spared me till you had met and refuted some one fact in my long narrative of them. But so far are you from taking that reasonable course in your reply, that you do not even *attempt* to meet but one solitary statement of mine, and that related to my dismission and recommendation to another church. I have so fully and plainly met your reply upon this point in another part of my letter that I think your success in controverting my facts has not been such as to give you much complacency. With this solitary effort of yours to refute one fact, which I beg you to review if you can derive any satisfaction in the contemplation, *all the statements, facts, reasonings and conclusions, in my answer remain by your own admission unimpeached and unimpeachable!!*

Having stated your object in your reply to be to defend yourself and brother Sawyer from my accusations when I had made none, and your motives to be to do justice to yourself, to brother Sawyer, the church, and the cause of religion, you immediately fall off into "strange vagaries." You seem wholly to have forgotten the purpose you proposed to yourself as well as the motives that were to guide you, and to be casting about in the history of your and my acquaintance for something to justify the position in which my unanswerable facts left you. You have for this purpose introduced a great variety of new matter into the controversy, which seems to me to have no very obvious pertinency to the subject. Or at least the most direct pertinency, which I can discover, is, that your statements upon the supposition they are true and cannot be explained, and that nothing else is also true, which would destroy their whole force in this controversy would go, in your view, to show, that I was much such a man as you think July 22, 1832 ought to have been dismissed from the office of deacon about July 13, of the same year. Now, if all this new matter introduced into the controversy, in your reply, is good evidence to justify a deed already done, it would have been good evidence to establish some charge as a ground of the deed before it was done. You reverse all the common and obviously reasonable proceedings in "criminal" cases. Your condemnation comes first. Then the evidence in the trial. And by and by I may expect the indictment!!

There is something so extremely absurd, not to say so absolutely ridiculous in the attitude you assume in your reply, that I confess I can hardly examine it with the seriousness and gravity which belongs to the discussion of so grave a question,—a question too so deeply affecting my personal character, and I

believe a fundamental principle in church polity. But disregarding your high and safe example by confining myself to general expressions only, I proceed to particulars.

The first sentence in your Reply, upon which I think it worth while to offer a remark is the following, which is the apology you offer for taking the step you did in advising me to resign my office.

"Collecting, as was unavoidable, from all quarters the *general sentiment and feeling*, I perceived that the crisis, which I had long feared, must come. If I know my own heart, it was my sincere desire and prayer, that a course might be found the least painful and disgraceful to Deacon Carter, and which would least tend to interrupt the harmony of this church."

I do not dwell with much complacency or respect upon these repeated and solemn protestations of yours of a desire to treat me with tenderness. I think I have said enough already to show what they mean. But as to the "*general sentiment and feeling*," which you could not help "collecting from all quarters;" it seems most passing strange that no body else, at least, no friend of mine and no impartial observer could discover any such thing. I always supposed that *general* sentiments and feelings in a community were made up of *particular* sentiments and feelings. But you have taught us a new principle in logic. You collect a general sentiment, without *first* having the particulars from which the general one is formed!

The next sentence to be noticed is this. It shows your manner of meeting my answer to the church; You say:

"I suggested to him the importance of taking some early measures to efface the impression made upon the public mind, but there is no reasonable ground for all which he has said of my urging and hurrying him to the adoption of these measures."

Now I did not use the words, "urging," or "hurrying" in this connexion; and I do not know as they occur in my answer. I narrated the conversations which I had had with you in detail, omitting nothing essential and stating nothing that you did not say. The "*urging*" and "*hurrying*" are inferences of your own from the particulars of the conversations as I stated them. If you wish to evade the plain and even your own inferences from these particulars, why do you not put your finger upon this sentence or that word and say, if you can, it is not so, it is not true? And then go on and tell what is true. It is easier, to be sure, to make a general and solemn denial of an irresistible inference or conclusion from a series of facts than to refute *one* of the facts from which the conclusion is drawn. But it is not quite so logical or quite so fair in controversy. Nor will candid minds pay much respect to *such a reply*.

The third passage, upon which I must offer a remark, is the following:

"The advice to resign the office of Deacon was given by all of us (viz; by you and the two brethren, whom you had chosen to be associated with you for the purpose, Deacon Wilder and brother Sawyer) and with a full conviction, which we have seen no cause to abandon, that this would have been the most eligible and prudent course. \* \* \* This advice, thus qualified, (viz; allowing me to write my own resignation) was, I hope, given with tenderness and a christian spirit. It was grounded on information upon which I could confidently rely, that the circumstance that Deacon Carter was an officer in the church had been the means of deterring respectable and excellent individuals from offering themselves for admission to our communion; that it was matter of dissatisfaction and grief to a large proportion of the present members of the church; and that his continuance in office alarmingly endangered the peace and prosperity of the church and society. For doing what I esteemed my imperious duty under these circumstances, I have received in return the communication which is placed on the files of the church."

I quote from your Reply, thus liberally, to take away all ground of complaint that I misrepresent or pervert the meaning of your language. If you had adopted the same principle in preparing your Reply, you could not have proceeded beyond the first paragraph relating to the subject without perceiving that a refutation of your statements was following you at every step. The first remark I have to offer upon the above quotation relates to a matter of fact. It will be perceived that you say, "the advice was given by *all of us*, and with a full conviction, which *we* have seen no cause to abandon," &c; The fact here stated is not true. I wish to be understood in my language. Taking it for granted, that the *us* in the first clause relates to the same persons represented by the *we*, in the second clause, and you cannot explain your meaning in any other way without a monstrous perversion; the facts of the case prove the assertion untrue. Deacon Wilder never gave the advice. He would not agree to your and brother Sawyer's advice even after being pressed by you much beyond the point of civility, *unless* with such cautious and ample qualifications as absolutely negated it. He would not allow that my resignation under the circumstances was expedient at all; *unless* I could resign in such a way or by such a communication to the church as would leave my character free from any imputation, and leave me in the possession and full enjoyment of all the privileges of a christian brother. But if I allow you to construe Deacon Wilder's delicacy and forbearance in not directly contradicting and opposing your and brother Sawyer's advice at once, and upon the spot, into *giving* your advice, which would be putting a construction upon his course, that I should not dare to do for any purpose, yet he immediately afterwards disavowed the advice for himself, "abandoned the conviction" you attributed to him, and gave his individual opinion most distinctly and unequivocally the other way. Nor is there any thing inconsistent

in his course. He was an officer in the church. He was and is, I believe, our mutual friend. He certainly was not more friendly to me than to you. He was a tried, faithful, and substantial friend to the church and society, always and zealously endeavouring to promote their best interests. You and brother Sawyer had represented the church and society as in a state of excitement and blaze. Taking your representations for facts, he yielded to your opinions and wishes. I called upon him on the 23d March, within two days after your advice was given. He said *then* he was glad I had taken time to consider, whether I should resign my office or not. He was anxious and thought of the thing almost all the time while awake. I told him, so far as I could learn, the church were not excited and in a blaze, as had been represented; and requested him to see the brethren and ascertain the fact. He did see them or many of them, and satisfied himself that your and brother Sawyer's representations were greatly exaggerated. He called upon you on the 30th March and told you so, as a faithful friend, presuming you were mistaken or deluded in the matter. He told you that the excitement was, so far as he could learn, confined to a particular and small part of the town, and even there was among people not of the church. He called upon me the same day and stated what he had told you. He was by this time convinced that the excitement and blaze was an imaginary existence, a fiction. Having been misled by your representations of the facts alleged as the ground of your advice, so far as not to contradict your advice, and being convinced of the error, he, henceforth, as a man of perfect integrity and honesty was bound to do, took decided ground upon that question, "abandoned the conviction you attributed to him" that my resignation was the best course, and declared his views repeatedly and decidedly to me and other members of the church. He said I ought not to resign under such circumstances; and he considered the subsequent proceedings against me by the church as unwarranted by scripture and ecclesiastical usage. With these incontrovertible facts before you, I leave you to explain the meaning of your pronouns, if you can, so as to make your sentence true in any sense.

The second remark I have to offer upon the above quotation from your Reply, relates to the grounds of the advice given, as you say "by all of us." Notwithstanding "the advice was given by all of us and with the full conviction, which we have seen no cause to abandon;" in the very same paragraph, you add; "it was grounded on information, upon which I could rely," &c. So difficult is it to conceal the fact even through one paragraph that you were the moving cause, at the bottom of the business. You furnished the information on which to act

in giving the advice. The advice, which "we" gave, you say, was founded on information upon which "I" could rely. It seems Deacon Wilder upon enquiry and examination could not rely upon the information, which you had afforded him upon the subject. You, as well as all who were willing to repeat your story, that my being in office "deterred respectable and excellent individuals from offering themselves for admission to our communion," were repeatedly requested to tell, who were thus deterred. But no information could be obtained. I confess I was quite desirous to know "the respectable and excellent individuals," who were deterred from performing an act, the duty of which they admitted, by the circumstance of my "being in office." It does not appear that these "excellent people" had any insuperable objection to doing their duty, except my being in office. If I were only a private member of the church, they could do their duty without further hindrance. And could you not enlighten your "respectable and excellent individuals," so that they could see the utter inconsistency of their demand, that I should be only deposed from office, as the condition of their offering themselves for admission to our communion? Or could you not see "*what manner of spirit they were of,*" who were capable of raising such an objection? And was it so much of an object to attract such persons to our communion as to justify so great a sacrifice?—great, certainly, on my part, if it were nothing for the other brethren of the church to be called upon to depose a deacon *for the sake* of having such "respectable and excellent individuals" offer themselves for our communion, as would not otherwise do it. Do you think, as a Doctor of Divinity, that that was a good and scriptural motive to urge upon me *at that particular time* to resign my office, or upon my brethren of the church to depose me? I have no more to say upon this point. I pass over the information, upon which you could so confidently rely that "my being *in office,*" not my being in *the church,* "was matter of dissatisfaction and grief to a large proportion of the present members of the church." The thirteen and two more, who, with all your efforts, could be persuaded to express their dissatisfaction and grief by voting to remove me from office, do not constitute a very large part of fifty! And I shall spare you the pain and mortification of referring particularly to the "respectable and excellent individuals," who have verified the truth of your information to the church upon the subject, by offering themselves for our communion since the only obstacle to their so doing was removed. In regard to the last sentence of the quotation above, I have only to say, I do not know by what right or authority you appropriate to yourself, (*I have received &c,*) a communication made to the church, in answer to a vote of the church, and ordered by the church to be put upon their files.

I shall quote but one paragraph more from the text of your Reply.

"The information was once and again repeated to Deacon Carter, that no formal complaint had been brought against him; that no catalogue of accusers *could* or *would* be furnished; that *under existing circumstances* there was no wish or intention to deprive him of the enjoyment of any privilege of a christian brother."

I have not many remarks to offer upon this paragraph. It sufficiently explains itself. Did you really mean to say "that no catalogue of accusers *could* be furnished? Or did your rhetoric for the moment get the ascendancy over your logic? I am inclined to the belief, that literally it expresses more truth than it does rhetorically. You say with an authoritative air, that "the information was once and again repeated to Deacon Carter, that no catalogue of accusers *could or would* be furnished;" as if your having told me so over and over again, should silence my complaints. I never denied that you told me so over and over again. I admit it. It is that very thing, of which I complain;—That you either would not or could not tell me who were my accusers. The clause in italics, "under existing circumstances," is an interpolation,—a prudent reservation,—an anchor to windward, for future use and reference. It never appeared in that connexion till after my answer was read to the church. You did say, and so did brother Sawyer, once and again, that "there was no wish or intention in any one, to deprive me of the enjoyment of any privilege of a christian brother." But neither you nor he ever made the reservation contained in the phrase "under existing circumstances," till after my answer to the church. If you had accompanied your advice to resign—with any such reservation, I should at once have perceived that you wished *then* to depose me and *afterwards*, if you pleased, and it should be expedient, to accuse me, or furnish the catalogue of accusers.

Having "embodied" a considerable mass of matter, which if you had not called it something else, I confess I should think looked much more like an accusation of me than a reply to what you term my accusation of you, you draw to the close of your pamphlet by the following return to the object you proposed.

"I do not deem it to be necessary to add more particular remarks and explanations; but will observe, that nothing in my hearing has dropped from the lips of our brother Sawyer, which was inconsistent with a friendly and christian regard for the best interest and welfare of Deacon Carter, and for the peace and prosperity of the church. I cannot but remark that some of the statements in his communication are incorrect, others highly colored, and the whole calculated to make an unfair impression of the course which had been pursued."



Having announced it as one object, on setting out in your reply, to defend brother Sawyer from my accusations, you do not mention him again till as in the above extract from your concluding paragraph. The above certificate then from you, constitutes your whole and entire defence of brother Sawyer. The amount of your defence is this. You assume that I have accused you and brother Sawyer; and you give brother Sawyer a certificate of his christian regard for the welfare of his accuser. I think brother Sawyer should be greatly obliged to you for his able defence; and I have no doubt he will give you a similar certificate of christian regard for my welfare, and then your mutual defence will be complete and triumphant!!

The last sentence of the above extract is another specimen of your mode of controverting facts and arguments. You pronounce "some of my statements to be incorrect." Why do you not tell which particular statements are incorrect? And then wherein they are incorrect? And after that tell what would be correct. Other statements, you say, are highly colored. Why do you not remove the coloring, then, that we may see the truth clearly? And "the whole," you triumphantly say, "is calculated to give an unfair impression." You ought to tell us then what the wrong impression is, and what the right one would be. How will your hearers or readers ever know how to correct the impressions you pronounce wrong, if you do not tell them wherein they are wrong, and what would be the right impressions.

Your defence of yourself against what you chose for your own purposes to consider a personal accusation from me is before the church in your reply, and before the public. Let them judge of the *character* of *such* a defence as well as of its ability and success. Your professed motives also, for making such a defence of that particular time must have become so well understood by all, before this, time as to need no further comment from me.

Before examining the *notes*, which you have appended, upon your own responsibility, to the printed copy of your Reply, now before the community, I propose to say a few words touching the circumstances of the transactions and means, by which you have brought this unfortunate controversy before the public. My answer to the church having been read and ordered by a vote of the church to be put upon the files, and your reply having been read and ordered in the same manner to be put upon the files,—the files being in your possession—I found what I thought very erroneous opinions getting abroad even among the members of the church, who were particularly friendly to me. Less than half the members of the church had heard my answer read, and of course could know nothing about it except from the representation of others; and I was most unwilling the

minds of the church should settle down into the conviction, that your reply was a most triumphant refutation of my answer, that my answer was "scurrillous," and that you had in your reply convicted me of a falsehood about the dismission and recommendation to another church, &c. These were the impressions which got abroad, I do not say you circulated them. But they got abroad. And I was sure no one, who could read my answer, would call it scurrillous; or could arrive at the conviction that I had been put in the wrong by any thing you had said in your reply. As it was not my business or habit to ride about the parish quite so much as it was yours, and as I felt from that circumstance I was *liable* to suffer, I felt as if I must devise some other means of counteracting the impressions I thought erroneous. I concluded to cause a few copies of my answer to be made in manuscript to be circulated, and actually began the work. I put a copy in circulation; having still another in my possession to make other copies from; but this method was attended with so much trouble, and would so imperfectly answer the purpose, from the difficulty of reading manuscript, especially among the older members of the church, that I abandoned it, and determined to have a few copies printed for the purpose.

Accordingly being about to take a journey to be absent several weeks, I took the manuscript, which I happened to have, not being able, as I shall by and by show, to get a copy certified by you, to a friend in Boston, and engaged him to procure for me a few printed copies, giving him strict injunctions to let no copy go out of his hands till my return, and receiving assurance that my injunction should be sacredly regarded. During my absence, a person called upon my friend in Boston and enquired if such a pamphlet was printed, and if so, for a copy of it. My friend answered affirmatively, but refused a copy. Whether the person went to the printing office and picked up the sheets or proof sheets, I do not know, but I have understood, that you had a printed copy of my answer two weeks before my return from my journey.

If you had a copy by such means, used either by yourself or your friends, you will not with much propriety call the circumstance a "publication" of it by me. I have felt obliged to state these particulars to show what is the exact meaning of the following proposition and its proof: "Mr. Carter must have distributed his pamphlet about the country long before the time he pretends, for we had a copy in 'New-Boston'\* a fortnight before his return from his journey." On my return I took my printed copies from my friend, with the assurance that not one had gone out of his hands. I wrote the name of each male

\* The village in Lancaster in which Dr. Thayer resides.

member of the church, as far as I knew them, upon a copy, and that my purpose might not be misunderstood, I put the name also into the body of the pamphlet in my hand writing, and then distributed them as I had opportunity. With the exception of my legal counsel, who were consulted touching points affected by the contents of the pamphlet, no copy was distributed beyond this by me, or with my consent or knowledge; till I found your pamphlet was given also to female members of the church, I then gave mine the same extension, and no more. Not a copy of my answer was distributed by any body beyond this, till I had certain evidence that yours had been sent particularly addressed to an acting judge of the court in a neighbouring town. It was not a copy originally given to a member of the church, and sent by second hand; it was addressed to the judge himself originally. You also sent your pamphlet to different individuals in different counties, to my personal and particular friends, to whom you supposed I should have sent mine; and thus gave them their first notice that there was any printing in the business. I had not yet sent or given a copy to even the members of my own family. *You thus took the lead in the "publication," and I defy you to show the contrary.*

This being the state of things, I lost no time in sending abroad copies of my answer to persons whom I supposed you had consulted, or to whom I supposed you had sent your pamphlet, as well as to my personal friends, who I knew were deeply interested in my welfare. Thus much for the responsibility of bringing the controversy before the public. But the responsibility of so doing belongs not only not to me, but to you, personally; the church never having authorized you or intended that you should do so. They voted to print their records and your reply "for the information and use of the members," not for general distribution in the community. The church have never used them for any other purpose, and have never authorized you to use them for any other purpose. The responsibility in the business, then, whether it be much or little, is wholly your own. The vote by the church to print at all was on a motion submitted, together with its ample preamble, by yourself; and submitted to such members of the church only as happened to be present, when you detained them after meeting on Sunday for the purpose. The church, therefore, as well as myself, are wholly exonerated from the responsibility of publication.

But there is another circumstance connected with your bringing the matter of printing before the church, which is of much graver consequence both to you and to me, than the bare fact, that the business was brought forward by yourself. On submitting your preamble and motion for printing the records and

your reply, to the members of the church present, you made this statement: "It will be recollected that at the time it was voted that Mr. Carter's answer should be placed upon the files of the church, *he said, he had no copy*. But his answer has been printed and distributed among the members of the church. I have compared the printed answer with the one on the files of the church, and they are the same, except some slight verbal alterations." If I said, at the time mentioned, that *I had no copy*; and afterwards without having in my possession or having access to the copy on the files, caused it to be printed almost or quite word for word,—then, I must have had a copy, when I told the church I had not, and was of course guilty of a deliberate falsehood in the face of the church. This was the impression you must have intended to convey to the church, and it was the impression you did convey. A brother, who knew I had a copy at the time alluded to, rose and said, he thought there must be some mistake about what you attributed to me, as saying, that I had no copy. He did not understand me to say so, at the time, and thought I could not have said so, for he knew at the same time, I had a copy. You then stated to the church that you were very confident I said so. And to prove conclusively that you thought so, *at the time*, you told the church, that you immediately after set your daughters to make a copy, presuming it would be wanted or called for; or told them to be ready to make one—in case it should be called for. This, if true, was certainly good evidence, that you understood me *at the time* to say what you attributed to me. You then called upon two brethren directly by name, and asked them if they remembered my saying so; and they said they did. This was pretty conclusive, certainly, that I had stated a falsehood to the church. You attempted to fortify your proof by calling upon some other brethren at random, but they did not sustain you. They could only remember, that I said something about having access to the copy on the files, or something about a copy; but they could bring up no recollection that I said I had no copy. Here the matter was dropped by you. I was not present at the meeting; and have had no official or other notice of your purpose to proceed farther in the business. If you considered your proof good and had any other purpose in bringing the matter before the church at that time than to prejudice me in their estimation, I am astonished, that you should allow so many months to pass without calling upon me in some way for an explanation. But as you evince no such design, I am obliged to state both the accusation and defence, or rest where I am, under the imputation from you of having stated a deliberate falsehood to the church;—convicted as it would seem by both positive and circumstantial evidence.

This is a very ingenious web,—to entangle me inextricably in a misdemeanor. It will require some little effort to unweave it; but it can be done. There never was ingenuity enough put into the head of one man to weave a web so intricate, that there was not ingenuity enough in the head of some other man to unravel it. There never has been a knot tied, since the Gordian Knot, so intricate that it could not, by patience and perseverance, be untied. I propose to unweave this intricate web of yours—to untie this almost Gordian Knot. To avoid repetition, I request you to turn back to the account of the third church meeting \* held July 13, 1832, and read the paragraphs, in which are stated the manner and circumstances of my manuscript answer being put upon the files of the church. It will be perceived that you had in your own hands my answer, and was resisting a motion of mine to have it put upon record. I claimed to have it restored to me, or to have the church take possession of it. I did not wish to have it left in your private possession, as you seemed to desire. It was an answer to a vote of the church, and I claimed to have it placed where it would appear in all future time with the other records of the proceedings against me. The controversy was not settled by any means, and I wished my answer to be placed where it could be referred to by myself as well as all other persons, whose duty it might become to investigate the business. I used all these arguments for the purpose of inducing the church, against your wishes, to put my answer upon record. These were the circumstances and these were the motives I had for urging the church to make such a disposition of the manuscript as would take it out of your personal possession and put it where others as well as myself might consult it, or refer to it, as often as occasion might occur.

Several persons and one brother of the church, if no more, knew that I meant to keep a copy, and that I had one at the time. For I had shown it to him on the day of reading my answer to the church. If I had been depraved enough to state a falsehood to the church in the matter as you represented, under any circumstances, I could hardly have been so foolish as to do it, having taken especial care to provide beforehand for the means of detection. Besides I did not suppose any body for a moment would expect or imagine that I should prepare so important a paper as my answer to the church and let it go out of my hands without a copy. As to the evidence of the two brethren whose recollection, *as it was at the church meeting*, sustained you; I beg to enquire if you had not taken the pains to converse with them upon the subject and endeavored to aid or

\* pp. 65. 66.

quicken their recollections a little. And how many other brethren did you converse with without success to endeavor to make them *recollect* that I said I had no copy. You could not find any other memories quite so elastic. Nor could you bring any of your friends, except those you called out first by name, to recollect any thing more than I allow to be the strict and literal truth. How happened you to call upon those two brethren first, particularly and by name? I will not attempt to strengthen my argument by any more particular reference to the individuals. But it would not be very strange if those *two individuals*, three months afterwards, whether they had enjoyed the benefit of a conversation with you upon the point or not, should so far mistake my words as to give an inference of their own minds at the time for the words themselves. And especially as they had you to ask them leading questions and I was not present to cross examine them. And moreover they would, certainly, be safe, in a doubtful case, to recollect what you assured them was so perfectly in your own recollection. Hearing me talk of consulting the copy—of referring to the copy—and that I *might* wish to take a copy—it would perhaps be the most obvious inference to one not at all accustomed to such proceedings or controversies, that I had no copy. If I had a copy at home, why should I wish to consult the one on the records or files of the church. If I had in my possession, what I knew was a copy, *they* would not readily perceive why that would not answer all my purposes. And if I talked of wanting to refer to—to consult—or take another copy, they would almost necessarily *infer* I had none, at the time; and almost necessarily, three months afterwards, so confound the words actually said, with their own inference at the time, that a leading question would bring them out as you wished. They would be much more likely to remember their own inference at the time, than the words used by me three months afterwards. Several other members of the church were present and heard my words at the time. Their memories were a little more tenacious, and they could not be made to come up to the point. They remembered very well all that *was* said, but they could not be made to confound a deduction of reason for a fact. So that, out of a large number of brethren equally cognisant of the facts, only two could remember, even with your assistance, what was necessary for your purpose.

So stands the case before we take into account your recollection, fortified by the circumstance you adduce, that you immediately set your daughters to make a copy, presuming it would be wanted or called for; or told them to be ready to make one in case it should be called for. Against your recollection of my words, I put into the case not only that I have no recol-

lection of using them; but that *I did not use them*. I have had occasion once before in the course of this letter to place my veracity against yours; and I do it now, if you assert that I used the words you have attributed to me, in the most explicit, direct and unequivocal terms. I did *not* say I had no copy. You may, possibly think *now* that you recollect the words you attribute to me. You might possibly misunderstand me at the time. And if you went home immediately and told your daughters to make a copy, or be ready to make a copy because it would be wanted, it would be good evidence that you did misunderstand me. But the *fact* of your immediately giving such a direction for such a purpose wants corroboration. There is much circumstantial evidence against it, and nothing positive yet adduced to sustain it. I propose to bring up the circumstances, which either render it probable that you did not give immediately any such direction for such a purpose; or if you did, certain, that you have officially withheld from me an important document due to me, upon my request, by your own admission.

The church meeting, at which the vote was passed, to vacate my office, was held July 13. July 18th, I received, in an envelope directed to Mr. James G. Carter, a certified copy of the vote purporting to remove me from the office of Deacon, without note or comment; except the N. B. below your certification, that you had found out there were two hands in the church, you did not see, and that these would make fifteen affirmative votes to remove me from office. I was more desirous of having before me the whole proceedings of the church at the meeting, than of having that single vote. Accordingly I addressed to you a note the same day, July 18th, in which I make the following enquiry and request. "May I be permitted to enquire if the motion and vote communicated is your *whole record* of the proceedings; and if not to ask the favor of *all* that has been recorded pertaining to that meeting." As you took no notice of my enquiry and request for a week, and as in the mean time you communicated to the church your reply to my answer; on the 25th July I addressed to you the following note:

"Rev. Dr. Thayer: Sir; July 18th I addressed a note to you, which I handed to your boy, enquiring if the motion and vote communicated by you to me on that day, constitutes your whole record of the proceedings of our church meeting July 13; and if not, asking the favor of all that has been recorded pertaining to that meeting. To that note I have received no reply. I learned, yesterday, on my return from Boston, that you made a communication to the church last Sabbath, in my absence, introducing some new matter to the church, deeply interesting to me and affecting my character. If I had known any such communication was to be made, I should have endeavoured to be present and heard what was said concerning me, or alleged against me, if any allegations were made. I certainly should have had no objections to your making any communication you

might think proper under your own responsibility ; but common courtesy and common justice would seem to require, that if your communication were to affect me at all, you should have informed me of your purpose, that I might have been present, and objected, if aught was offered which I thought objectionable, either in matter, time or manner. As it is, however, I have only to call your attention to my note of the 18th, and to add this further request, that you will furnish me with a copy of your communication to the church last Sabbath, together with your record of the doings of the church in regard to it. *My object is, and I trust you will perceive the justice and propriety of the request, to have before me a full and complete view of the proceedings of the church as appears from their records and files.* I regret to give you any trouble to copy papers for me, and if you will allow me, I will cause copies of all I request to be made ready for you to certify.

July 25, 1832.

Very respectfully, your christian brother,

JAMES G. CARTER."

Although I should have been glad of the papers I requested before you took your journey, you had, perhaps, a right to consult your own convenience as to time. You did consult your own convenience notwithstanding my note of 18th remained unanswered. On your return I received the following note with the papers therein referred to.

"Monday Aug. 6, 1832.

Dear Sir; On my return from a journey on Saturday last, I found your note of July 25th. I should have answered the note of July 18th, but presumed from the tenor of it, you would desire all, which should be placed on file touching your case. I now embrace the earliest moment to comply with your request. *I send the entire records and the reply to your communication to the church.*

Yours, with christian regard,

NATHL. THAYER."

My note of July 18th, I admit, you might, with your notions of the distinction between Records and Files, understand to exclude a copy of my answer. I asked only for your "*whole record,*" "*all that has been recorded pertaining to that meeting,*" and you might understand me as not requesting a copy of my own answer. Though I should think it would have been pretty natural, if you understood me to say, July 13, that *I had no copy, and immediately told your daughters to make one ; for it would be wanted or called for,* you would have thought, even before you took your journey, that I should be somewhat anxious to have a copy of a document so important to me. With tolerable expedition, if the work were "*immediately*" commenced, it must have been completed in ten or twelve days. And if completed, it would have been in accordance with your accustomed politeness, to forward it even without any request, or at least when my note was before you requesting your *whole record* and *all that had been recorded.* You did even understand my note of July 18th to go the length of requesting copies of *files* as well as records. For you say in your answer August 6, *you presumed from the tenor of it, I should desire all which SHOULD BE*



PLACED ON FILE *touching my case*. If you believed I wanted all that *should be* placed on file, you must have believed I should be equally desirous of having all that *had been* placed on file. And if you had a spare copy of my answer prepared, I can hardly see how you could avoid sending it, even upon the request contained in any note of July 18th.

But in my note July 25th, I removed all pretence of doubt as to my purpose. I said in that note; "my object is to have before me a *full and complete view* of the proceedings of the church as appears from their records and files." And still further, I added in the same note, in order to remove any difficulty from the trouble of copying, that I would do it myself, if you would only *certify* the papers. I wanted, and I wanted very much a *certified* copy of my answer. I had a copy, but it was not *certified*. It was your "Attest, Nathaniel Thayer," I was trying to get. For I began to fear before this time, that I should be obliged to make some use of it besides letting it slumber upon the files of the church to be misrepresented and branded with opprobrious names. And if I was ever to show it to any body, it was highly important it should bear upon its face that it was authentic,—the very answer, and no more nor less, than the one I read to the church. But I could not get even a copy *authenticated*, after it was prepared for the purpose. I could not misunderstand your feelings upon the subject after the receipt of your note August 6. After telling me that you understood from the tenor of my first note that I wanted files as well as records, and after acknowledging the receipt of my second note July 25, which was perfectly explicit upon the point; you add "I now embrace the earliest moment to comply with your request. I send the *entire records and the reply*." And why not my answer as well as your reply? They were put upon the files together. Especially you understood me to say almost a month before, I had no copy, and had immediately set your daughters to make one for me. I respectfully submit to you this dilemma. You either did not understand me, at the time, to say I had no copy, and did not direct one to be prepared for me; or you withheld a paper, as recording officer, of the church, which you admit I ought to have, which you admit I much wanted and requested. It will not much concern me, which horn of the dilemma you choose to hang upon. If you take the one most unfavorable to me, it will only go to show that you understood me to say, what I deny that I said, and what it was the most improbable thing in the world, I could have said, and what many others equally likely to hear and remember right with yourself are confident I did not say. If you ever propose to move further this question of veracity in our church, I shall be happy to proceed to the business at your earliest convenient time.

Before saying any thing of the intrinsic character of the two notes, you have appended to the printed and published records and files of the church, it seems necessary to offer a few remarks as to the time and manner, in which these precious pieces of information are thus brought before the church and the public by you, upon your individual and "sole responsibility." I will allow you to explain your own objects and motives for this extraordinary transaction.

"The two notes, which form a part of this pamphlet, are collected from what the Pastor believes to be authentic records and sources. He is solely responsible for their introduction. He gives them this publicity in the belief, that it will be a gratification to the brethren, and will be important in forming a judgment, to be placed in possession of all the facts, which are connected with the chief grounds of the general and almost unprecedented excitement."

This is your entire preface to your pamphlet, and explains your objects and motives in the publication. It should be borne in mind that the vote to remove me from my office, passed 13th July; and these notes are, for the first time, brought to the consideration of the brethren, late in October following;—more than three months after they have pronounced judgment! Such a transaction on your "sole responsibility" does not need much explanation from me; and, therefore, I shall trouble you with but a few words touching the subject.

The "Academy Concern," which is the subject matter of your first note, was never mentioned or alluded to, to my knowledge, by you or any body else in the proceedings of the church till the third church meeting, after I had read my answer, when I was removed from office. The business, therefore, was consummated before or at the time this subject was first alluded to. That allusion was only in a distant manner, somewhat like that you state in your Reply, page 10 of your pamphlet. There were some very good reasons why such an allusion was not made before; whether they were removed at the time the allusion was made, or have since been removed, I leave you to explain. This subject, then, having never been mentioned in the proceedings, could not have had much influence in producing "the general and almost unprecedented excitement," as it existed before and when I was removed from office. All the transactions in the "Academy Concern" were five years old. And I have been a deacon in the church but two years! The most distorted and hideous forms of this whole business, which unprincipled, concerted, and depraved ingenuity could invent, had been most industriously held up to the public gaze in the town and vicinity, till the public were heartily tired of them. The very effort, which was necessary to keep these frightful pictures before the public, convinced them there was no truth or

reality in them. All the excitement, which could be produced with this concern in any shape, had long since abated. The blaze,—a bright one in its time,—had burnt out long before *I was chosen* deacon. The thirty brethren, and of thirty two present, who gave me their votes for the office of deacon, with your full concurrence, consent, and approbation, I should think, ought to have effectually barred any allusion to that subject as a ground of subsequent excitement or dissatisfaction, at least among the members of the church. But no inconsistency, however monstrous, is too great to be braved in a strait for reasons to justify an irretrievable step! And in the face of this monstrous inconsistency, you make allusion for the first time, in oblique and general terms, on the day of my removal from office, to these old, stupid, senseless calumnies, admitted to be so, or pronounced to be so by yourself almost in terms; and which were absolutely worn out, before I was elected to office. Thus much of your *allusion* to this subject, at that particular time, as a ground of the then present excitement, which had swept, or, with your assistance, was sweeping me out of office.

The "Reading-Room Concern," forms the subject matter of your second note. Out of this business had grown the public slander, for which at your direct instigation I had commenced an action to bring out the facts of the case and rebuke the slanderer. This is the "*crime*," several times mentioned in your pamphlet in such a manner as to allow people to understand you, that I had been even indicted, and my character was on trial in court. This business or rather the excitement promptly raised out of it, was all along the *only* cause of your advice, which was the cause of the action of the church. You assumed an excitement, which did not exist, because you thought you could make one in season, and refused all enquiry into its existence or the causes of it. You were perfectly resolute and consistent in your resistance to any enquiry into the facts of the reading-room concern, from the commencement of the difficulty in the church, March 21st, down to the publication of your pamphlet in October; although I had then been removed from office, so far as a vote of the church could do it, more than three months! Both you and the church had been most earnestly solicited, both by me and my friends, both publicly and privately, in every stage of the proceedings, to go into an investigation of the facts about the Reading Room, which was your only alleged ground of your affirmed excitement, which you evinced a steady determination, should sweep me from office, without any examination into its reality or the validity of its causes. You for yourself, and for the church, and the church for themselves, by acquiescing in your wishes, refused all enquiries in

every form, public or private, official, or unofficial into the facts of the case, till after the action of the church—till after the consummation of the business. In our first private interview, and in every private interview, at the first public meeting of the church, and in every meeting of the church relating to the business, you refused and resisted enquiry or explanation from me in every form. You never would go or allow the church to go deeper into the business, than the very surface. The church *must see with your eyes*, the blaze and excitement, and that was enough for them to act upon. This is not fiction or exaggeration; however strange and incredible it may appear to reasonable minds. It is sober incontrovertible fact!!

But the reasons for such a course;—the reasons are as remarkable as the course itself. In private, when I urged an investigation;—"the church could not resolve itself into a court to try me;"—"the church could not receive as evidence my statements;—would not be called together to hear an explanation of the circumstances from me or even from yourself;"—and once and again no catalogue of accusers *could* or would be furnished." In public, when I invoked candor and deliberation in proceedings so calculated to injure me, and offered and urged investigation; and when brethren of the church repeatedly professed not to see any cause for such proceedings, and most respectfully and earnestly desired you and others, who did profess to see, to enlighten them; for they did not and could not understand the business;—your answer always was: "It is not the business of the church to investigate the truth or falsehood of the charges, and you hoped no such inquiry would be made. The charges" (that is the slander for which I had commenced an action) "were submitted to the civil tribunals, and the church ought not to interfere or go into the merits of the case. It would be improper for the church to anticipate or interfere with the course of justice in the civil tribunals." Even in your "reply" communicated to the church a week after I had been removed from office, you say in the printed copy, p. 10: "*These being now subject to judicial investigation and decision, it would ill become me or this church to pronounce sentence of acquittal or condemnation.*" And yet these very questions;—questions still before the civil tribunals, investigated and undecided, as much as they ever were;—form the subjects of your notes! You would not allow,—it would be improper,—and therefore the church would not allow a statement or investigation of the facts while my case was before them undecided, because even such a private investigation would interfere with the course of justice. And yet, three months after the church had decided the case, had pronounced sentence of condemnation as far as they could—the civil tribunals

not having acted upon or investigated the questions at all,—you bring forward statements of your own, purporting to be the facts of the case, and submit them to the church and give them extensive circulation in the community on your “sole responsibility.” Who but you would willingly incur such a responsibility? And you even sent or furnished and allowed a copy to be sent, with the statements sanctioned by your name touching the cases before the civil tribunals yet undecided, to a judge, who might and probably would be soon called upon officially to adjudicate them. Where is your reason and consistency? And all this you have done, on your “sole responsibility” and as you say in your preface, “in the belief that it will be a gratification to the brethren, and will be important in forming a judgment, to be placed in possession of the facts.” Did you compile these notes for the benefit of the church or the benefit of the public at large? If you compiled them for the church, why did you not do it, or allow it to be done, before they took any decided step?—before they pronounced judgment? If you compiled and published them for the benefit of the community at large, and the civil tribunals in particular, where are all your reasons for not allowing a private investigation in the church lest you should interfere with the course of justice? And this responsibility you have incurred, without the request, direction or permission of the church, “in the belief it would be a gratification to the brethren,”—“important in forming a judgment;”—to have the facts of a case they had decided three months before, without the facts!—O for shame! If I were dealing with any body but a Doctor of Divinity, I should think no rebuke for such conduct more appropriate, than to point at him the finger of withering scorn and contempt! and say—for shame!!—for shame!!!—

These remarks upon the *time* and *manner* of bringing your notes before the public are made without any reference to their truth or falsehood;—made, I trust, with perfect propriety if your statements were strictly and literally true, and if nothing else were also true to explain them and qualify their meaning, and if you yourself had not known other facts, which were equally important to the issue. I propose now to examine their correctness and intrinsic character. As the questions to be affected by your statements are still before the civil tribunals uninvestigated and undecided, and as the church have decided the question so far as their action is concerned, I have no motive now for going more into detail in their examination than is necessary to meet your statements and explain them. It will readily be perceived, that while I have civil actions pending to be affected by the facts of the case, I shall be somewhat restricted in the range as well as minuteness of my remarks.

In regard to the "academy concern," I am on many accounts sincerely rejoiced to see something even purporting to be a statement of the facts of the case which have been "connected with the almost unprecedented excitement." Up to this time it has been all blaze and excitement—nothing distinct and tangible. And although your note upon the subject does not descend to anything very intelligible as a cause of excitement, yet I am glad to meet, for it is the first time I have ever met, even such a partial, garbled statement, with so respectable and responsible an endorser as yourself.

It appears from your note that I have received \$94.00 in money—a piece of land—(about half an acre)—and a note for \$500.00 which never has been paid; and "it is matter of notoriety," that I have not established with these immense resources, an institution for the education of School-teachers. It is true, as you say, "other inhabitants subscribed liberally for my encouragement;" but then you know it is also true that they never paid their subscriptions. And I could not very well erect and put in operation institutions with subscription papers; when those, who *subscribed* for my encouragement, did not *pay* for my encouragement. You forgot, I presume, when you mentioned the liberality of "other inhabitants" in *subscribing*, to state the other part of the fact, quite as important to me, and equally well known to you, that the "other inhabitants" never paid what they subscribed. Any one from reading your statement with its "liberal subscriptions," "its land," "money," and "note!" would hardly imagine, at first glance, that the above was the exact and literal amount of its substantial encouragements,—to say nothing of the *discouragements*, which accompanied them.

But as you have furnished me with an occasion, I propose to say a few words upon the circumstances, under which I came to this place, and by which I have become involved in these perplexing controversies. In regard to the institution for school teachers, I will state what cannot be new to you or to any body, into whose hands this letter will probably fall. After much attention to the subject of education and considerable experience and observation in its practical details, I became thoroughly convinced, that the influence of the common schools was far less than it should be, or might be even with no greater expense. And I became satisfied that the inefficiency of the system of popular education was mainly attributable to the want of practical skill and energy in the teachers of common schools. With these convictions deeply fixed in my mind, and with the belief that the moral health of the community, if not the safety and permanency of our free institutions depended very essentially upon these same common schools, I put myself

to inquiry for the causes of inefficiency and the remedies for them. Begin where you would in the work of reform, nothing would prove effectual till the character and skill of the teachers were essentially improved. The parts of the complicated machine might be ever so perfect, still its motion and regularity depended upon the main spring,—and that main spring was the teacher. In viewing the courses of studies of any and all existing institutions, they seemed to be directed to other and very different objects,—objects, if not incompatible, at least, wide, very wide of the true object in educating a teacher. So very different, from anything then in existence, within my knowledge, would the object of educating teachers be, that it seemed to me the means for attaining the object were to be created or arranged anew rather than to be sought for among existing institutions. After entertaining these views several years and giving them precision by study, observation, and reflection, I gave myself wholly to the object. I thought much upon the subject and I wrote much, and with zeal upon it, for several years. At length I applied to the Legislature for aid in establishing an institution for the education of teachers. The application was entertained with respect by every department of the government, and the project was even regarded with distinguished favor by many leading and influential men in the public councils. I seemed to have every prospect of success in obtaining an appropriation by the legislature in aid of an object, ever worthy of enlightened legislation.

In this state of the question before the legislature, a very favorable report having been made upon the subject by a large and very intelligent committee, at the head of which was the present speaker of the house of representatives, then a distinguished member, and always foremost in the cause of popular education; and a bill reported by the same committee having passed several of its stages, my hopes were high. I seemed to be on the verge of compassing the essential means of executing a plan, which had for several years been the darling project of my soul. With the ardor and enthusiasm inspired by the importance of the object, and the apparent prospect of success in accomplishing it, I was ready to risque every thing in my possession upon the project. It was in this state of the case that I began to cast about for a place to locate myself; and other people in different quarters begun to consider the advantages to themselves of having me establish myself in their vicinity. Offers of houses,—offers of land,—and offers of money,—were made in various forms and from various places and persons. Among the offers was one from Lancaster! The amount of this offer was, the use of a certain building,

upon conditions to be performed on my part, which the building never had purchased before,—never has, since I was dispossessed of it, purchased of any body else,—and, I venture to say, never will again purchase. The inducement to come to Lancaster was further enhanced by the *then* leading and influential men in Lancaster presenting me with a subscription paper, on which were the names of the several “other inhabitants, who *subscribed* liberally for my encouragement.” The gross amount of the subscriptions was about \$1700,00 which I supposed was to be well and truly *paid* for my encouragement—encouragement to do something, not at the payers pleasure afterwards, as a bounty or reward for having done something. This offer was much less, to be sure, and embarrassed with more conditions relating to the Academy building than, at least one other; but some motives and inducements of a private nature, which you will very well understand, determined me to settle in Lancaster even with the less encouragement of pecuniary aid.

Being sanguine in my darling project and ready to stake every thing upon its practicability and success, I immediately, while the bill before the Legislature was yet pending, purchased near \$10,000 worth of houses and other real estate, which I thought would be essential to my purposes. I had determined to go on, and if the Legislature refused the grant the first session, I was confident they would make it the next. The bill was postponed in its last stage at the heel of the session to the next Legislature. But I meant to go on, upon my own resources, and such as were *liberally subscribed*, for my encouragement. I acquired the evil of possessing the academy building, encumbered with all the conditions, securing to the proprietors more advantages than they had ever before, or have ever since enjoyed; and one individual not alluded to in your statement paid down promptly his subscription of \$200,00; and at the same time placed his son in my family, disdaining to avail himself of a deduction of seventy five per cent in tuition, which was one of the conditions, on which I was to have the use of the academy building of its proprietors, though he was one of the largest proprietors in it. While this topic is before me, I ask your attention to the view of the subject taken by this mutual friend of yours and mine. I addressed a letter to him since the commencement of the present difficulties enquiring his views; and I have recently received his answer, from which I offer you the following extract:

“On the subject, relating to which you make enquiries, I perfectly remember the great earnestness and activity, which prevailed among the most influential men in Lancaster, to induce your decision to *come there*, rather than to *settle* at Shrewsbury, where solicitations to secure your



services, were in no degree less earnest. I remember also, that soon after taking charge of the school, there occurred a number of unpleasant circumstances, originating in the melancholly state of Mr. Kingsbury's\* domestic affairs, and the general sympathy of the community therefor; from whence resulted an opposition to your course, which you could not foresee or control; and which was followed by a persecution, whose violence and duration surpassed any thing of the kind I had ever witnessed; and such as I hope to be spared the pain of ever again witnessing."

"I should not hesitate to demand a return of the \$200.00 I paid you; if I considered you to be culpable, or the cause of the failure; but this I do not. On the contrary every thing attests and particularly so your great investment in real estate, the sincerity, truth, and devotedness of your intentions. It was however beyond the power of any individual to stem the torrent that was opposed to you, for which, I confess I have never been able to trace an adequate cause."

And what do you think this mutual friend of ours will say, on seeing your present attitude to me upon this subject; when he reflects how much you, yourself, contributed in giving him the views of the subject expressed in these extracts from his letter? And when he remembers how perfectly you sympathized with him in his views with all the facts before your eyes? But to proceed with my brief account of the circumstances of my coming here to establish myself. Having made my investments in real estate for my purposes, and assumed the academy building, I immediately employed two assistant teachers to aid me in carrying on my establishment. The first step in the organization of my institution, in conformity with the plan developed before the legislature, and approved by the report of the committee was, to put in complete operation, an elementary school, where complete and thorough education should be practiced. This was a step antecedent and preliminary in its nature, to inviting candidates for school teachers. And it was so stated in the report of the committee of the Legislature. To this preliminary step, I gave my first and undivided attention. Besides the two assistant teachers, which I employed at an expense considerably exceeding a thousand dollars a year, I forthwith purchased a considerable apparatus, such as I thought appropriate and necessary to my purposes. And before six months, I had increased it to a cost of more than \$500.00. Ten thousand dollars invested in real estate for the purpose!—the immediate employment in the elementary school of three practical and efficient teachers!—and five hundred dollars worth of apparatus within six months!—all, the

\* Mr Kingsbury was the preceptor in the Academy building, when I took possession of it. His employment, as an usher or assistant, was another of the conditions stipulated for on the part of the proprietors. So that with the other conditions of the possession of the building, I acquired the positive and fatal evil of being compelled to employ a dissatisfied and obstinate assistant, who was disposed to thwart all my plans and purposes under my own eyes.

efforts of a humble individual,—one would think was giving pretty good and strong evidence of sincerity and earnestness in the project at least, if it did not go beyond and prove the rashness and folly of the projector.

And what were my patrons in Lancaster doing mean time to attest their sincerity and earnestness in promoting the establishment?—To aid and encourage me in the great enterprise in which I had so unequivocally embarked? Nothing! A small pittance only of the sum subscribed was paid. The rest was withheld. And if the assistance and encouragement had stopped here I should have done very well. But it did not. Many of my patrons had become violent opposers before the end of the first quarter. Almost all were indifferent and looked coldly on to see how the thing would come out. The subscribers generally withheld their subscriptions, and as I was irretrievably committed by my investments, they were much more anxious to justify themselves in not paying than they were to aid in doing what they professed so much desire should be done. My zealous patrons of Lancaster had in a very short time, from various causes, become my violent, and some of them my vindictive opposers. I was enveloped in a real blaze!—an excitement!—What could I do? I could not prosecute my petition, yet undecided, before the Legislature. For if they had appropriated a million of dollars and given it to my individual discretion, I could not have proceeded with a seminary for teachers in Lancaster. Unless perchance, I had thought of the expedient of first giving half of it to *my patrons* to induce them to *let me alone*! I could not quell the excitement. I could not put out the blaze. Nor could I escape from it, with my \$10,000 worth of real estate. I did the only thing I could do. I endeavoured to appease the excitement by forbearance and prudence,—that prudence you have so often and so warmly commended. I stood bolt upright in the blaze till it burnt out. You helped to put it out; and no body but you, knew where laid its last surviving spark, and no body but you could have found it to aid in kindling another blaze!

Having struggled through a little more than one year, opposed at every point, my actions and purposes misrepresented, my motives perverted and impeached, my character assailed, the ears of the community abused as far and as wide as the influence of my PATRONS could be extended, I was violently dispossessed of the building, in which I was attempting to put in operation an elementary school, the first step in the plan of establishing an institution for teachers! The conditions, hard as they were, on which I took possession of the building, had been faithfully performed on my part. No man or body of men has shown, or can show the contrary. This and the prelimina-

ry steps leading to it constituted the outrage upon decency and my rights, which so disgusted you, that you resigned your seat at a board of trustees, who could be guilty of such conduct. This board of trustees, a majority of whom were of my *Lancaster patrons*, had been formed during the year upon the strength of an old petition, which had been lying upon the files of the Legislature some time, and whose original purpose was obviated by surrendering the building which the corporation were to take care of, to me. This corporation, thus formed, proceeded with all directness and practicable despatch to the real object to which they had been created; viz. to dispossess me of the Academy building. The corporation, acting by and through my most *violent patrons*, after various proclamations, summonses to surrender, and such other means as a majority of such a corporation would be likely to adopt, literally crept if they did not secretly force their way into the window of the academy building while I was absent in vacation, and turned my property, books, and apparatus into the street. I should have vindicated my violated rights in this instance, if the possession of the academy building on such condition as my *patrons* attached to it, had been an object worth the trouble. In all these proceedings, the Messrs. Carters, (whose injured rights you state in your note, to be, that with \$94.00, a small piece of land,—and a note, which they never would pay, I have not erected a seminary for teachers,) were partakers and advisers. The academy building, having stood in the possession of this valiant corporation bolted and barred one year to keep me out of it, the real proprietors of the property and the people of the town being meantime deprived of the benefit of any school, was unbarred. A feeble effort made to open and continue a humble school afterwards closed the labors and important trust of this corporation. Having accomplished the great object for which it was created; viz. having dispossessed me of the building; the corporation was dissolved; and its elements returned to the walks of private life. The building having stood a long time empty was perceived to be useless, and was sold for the benefit of the original proprietors, and thus became private property. This I suppose is the end of the "Academy Concern."

These few remarks in connexion with the statement in your note will I think enable you and the public to understand the nature and extent of my obligations to my *patrons of Lancaster*! I beg you in particular, for all these facts are very well known to you, and you once took the same view of them which I now take, to dwell a little upon this subject; and consider how reasonable a ground of *excitement* among the principal actors in the scenes described, it affords *against me*, five years afterwards! And when you have contemplated that view of the

subject to your satisfaction, I should like to have you glance at the propriety—I do not say decency, honor, or honesty—but the propriety ; I should like to have you glance at the propriety of making such a statement as is contained in your published note, “*to gratify the brethren,*” and “*enable them to form a judgment*” upon a question you had forced them to decide three months before !!

Apart from the sum paid by our friend, whose views I have before given, I have received of substantial, unequivocal, encouragement in cash from all others in Lancaster about \$100. The whole evidence of any real design to encourage the enterprise, whether money, land or any thing else, would not pay one half the loss on *personal* property I sustained by the opposition of my Lancaster patrons and the consequent defeat of the enterprise. And to add, if it is possible to add, to the absurdity of the attitude you assume, the opposition and defeat are chiefly the work of those same persons who profess to be *excited against me* for not doing more to benefit them and their estates in Lancaster. There are many aggravating particulars in the details of the history of my Lancaster patronage, to which I shall not now allude. I have however ample and authentic means, and I could allude to them with effect. And if *you* will call for a complete development of the circumstances, or more fully justify me by any *act of yours* in going particularly into them before the public, it shall be done promptly and thoroughly.

By whatever means the defeat of the enterprise has been effected ; the fact is obvious and certain. The failure,—I hope but a temporary failure,—of a project of high and important bearing upon the public welfare, to which I have devoted several years of the best part of my life, is certainly as great a disappointment and as mortifying to me as it can be to any body. And the loss,—irretrievable loss,—sustained by me personally is more, twenty times told, than to all other persons together. If all the particulars and facts of the “Academy Concern” could be fully known, I should be the last person in the world against whom an excitement could be raised an account of them, in any mind not absolutely purblind and bewildered by passion and prejudice. Without enlarging more upon the topic, here, I have said enough, I trust, to satisfy every body else, if it does not satisfy you, that your statement about it in your first note is partial and garbled. Or to use favorite phrases of your own, I think, I have *proved* and *shown*, conclusively, that your statement is “*highly colored, and calculated to give a wrong impression of the course that has been pursued.*”

In passing to your second note, which relates to the “Reading-Room Concern,” I remark that I have in another part of

my letter alluded to the subject, but only so far as to show your cotemporary opinion upon my course, with all the facts and circumstances of the case before you. To avoid repetition, I refer to you that brief allusion;\* and shall now proceed to examine the extrinsic character of your statement in regard to the subject contained in your second note. To give your statement greater weight in the community, you profess in your preface above quoted to derive your facts from "authentic records and sources." With such good means of information before you, by your own admission on a question deeply affecting my character, and designed deeply to affect it, if the facts in your statement are not true, or if they are not the whole which were equally well known to you, from the same "authentic records and sources" and material to the issue; then you are either culpably careless, or wilfully perverse and wicked. In either case it will show that your statements of facts are not at all to be relied upon, on questions where you have a decided interest.

I have before me authentic records and sources of information, upon the subject, and I have precisely the same upon every material point, which you had or profess to have had. In connexion with these common sources of information, I propose to examine your statement; printed and published also with the sanction of your name for its truth and correctness. The first point in your statement, which I propose to compare with the authentic records, is thus expressed by you.

"In 1821 an Association was formed, which assumed the name of the 'Lancaster Reading-Room.' *The original proprietors, of which number was Dea. James G. Carter, obliged themselves to pay each \$5.00 per year, and ten cents per day for each volume, when it had been kept from the Library more than ten days.\*\*\* Each proprietor had the privilege of introducing a periodical work, for which he was to be allowed in the annual assessments.* Dea. Carter furnished the Edinburgh Review, and in the account of the association is credited for all his volumes \$12.50."

The first sentence in this extract from your note is true though rather unimportant. The next sentence, though it involves a very nice and critical point in the controversy between me and some of the proprietors is false, decidedly and unequivocally false and untrue. In this assertion, which I think you will be able easily to understand, I have not reckoned without my host. To sustain my position I subjoin an exact and entire copy of the original agreement or compact, of which you as well as I were a party, in 1821.

"We the subscribers, agree to take and pay for the following publications and newspapers written against our names, and also agree to the following conditions relating thereto; viz; The Reviews after they are received shall be deposited in the Reading-Room three days, then each subscriber

\* See page 26.

may take out his own Review with the privilege of keeping it seven days, then to be deposited in the Room for the use of other subscribers under the same restrictions. Newspapers shall remain in the Room until the evening of the day on which they are received; then may be taken out the same as Reviews excepting that they shall not be kept out by any subscriber more than one day. All Reviews and Newspapers shall finally be deposited in the Reading-Room, there to remain so long as the subscribers continue their membership."

The following persons signed the above agreement and wrote their publications against their names;

NATHANIEL THAYER,	-	-	-	CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.
-	-	-	-	UNITARIAN MISCELLANY.
ASA PACKARD,	-	-	-	NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.
NATHANIEL PRABODY,	-	-	-	GILLMAN'S PERIODICAL WORK.
JAMES G. CARTER,	-	-	-	EDINBURGH REVIEW.
JOSEPH WILLARD,	-	-	-	LONDON QUARTERLY REVIEW.
OLON WHITING,	-	-	-	ATHENEUM.
FOIGNAND AND PLANT,	-	-	-	NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.
-	-	-	-	LITERARY JOURNALS.
JAMES MILNE,	-	-	-	QUARTERLY REVIEW.

This is the entire original compact executed complete. The committee, who drew up the report, which professed to be so thorough and minute, preparatory to selling the library at auction, say in that report:

"It appears that in addition to the subscribers upon the above plan, other persons were admitted to the same privileges by paying a sum not less than \$4 annually, in order to create a fund for the purchase of new books."

These are the original and authentic sources of information upon the subject. None can be more original or more authentic. I suppose you had these before you, when you wrote your statement for publication. I cannot think you would venture upon such a statement for publication without the papers before you. If you did, you certainly knew the papers were in existence and accessible to you; for one of them bears your signature, and the other was read aloud at a meeting at which you had recently presided. You could not, therefore, *knowing* these authentic records and sources of information were in existence, *believe* that any other records and sources were authentic, if they contained any thing essentially different. And now I ask your attention to the discrepancy between your statement and the truth, upon a critical, material, and important point in the controversy. Your statement, quoted above, says; "*the original proprietors obliged themselves to pay each \$5.00 per year.*" The original compact, which bears both your signature and mine, says; "*We, the subscribers agree to take and pay for the following publications and newspapers,*" and certain other conditions having been performed "*to let them remain*" in the reading room "*so long as subscribers continue their membership.*" Now admitting that the nominal price of every

"publication and newspaper" happened to be just \$5.00 per annum, which was not the fact, is it the same thing to subscribe five dollars and be credited with the publication as you state the fact, and to subscribe for the publication, and deposit it in the reading room *with the right to resume it* whenever you chose, as the original compact itself states it? But the price of the publications varied. You, for example put in two publications, the Christian Disciple, whose price was \$2.00 and the Unitarian Miscellany, whose price, if I recollect rightly was \$1.00. Another gentleman put in Silliman's Journal, whose price I believe was \$6.00. And two other gentleman in company put in the New Monthly Magazine whose price was also \$6.00. Was this subscribing \$5.00 a piece in cash? *If not*, so far as I can understand, *you have written and published* A FALSEHOOD! *deeply affecting my character.*

It was never understood to be subscribing \$5.00 per year, because other persons were immediately admitted to the same privileges as to taking out books for \$4.00 per year, in consideration of having no right to resume their money again, as we could and some did resume our books. Now it is necessary to resort to your statement or something tantamount in order to destroy the identity of my property in the Edinburgh Reviews, and cut off my right to resume them at my pleasure, according to our original agreement; or else it will appear, upon an investigation of this business, that so far from my having plundered any books from this Library, my private property in books, to the amount of \$12.50, according to your statement, has been sold at auction, and the proceeds withheld from me without my consent and against my emphatic and decided protestations, in your presence!! But I cannot conceive if your personal desire being so great to justify my opponents in this matter, and now to put me in the wrong, as to make you think and say that depositing certain or any publications, or newspapers which may vary in price from three dollars, to six dollars a year, with the right to resume them at pleasure, is subscribing just five dollars a year to be paid in cash or books with no right to resume them at all. I cannot offer you any sincere congratulations on the new lights you have discovered, which have led you to abandon the ground you occupied, when you told people, with all the facts before you, that *I had put my enemies completely in the wrong in this matter.*"

After convicting you with evidence bearing your own signature of one such error, mistake, misstatement, or falsehood, whichever it may be, with the authentic records and sources of information professedly before you, and after having shown the critical and important bearing of the said error, mistake, mis-

statement, or falsehood upon the issue of the controversy, I think the public would excuse me, if I should decline examining very particularly your account current between me and the Reading-Room, which you have published for their edification. If you were of my own age, rank, and dignity, I should feel at liberty to consult my ease and inclination by passing over the other parts of your statement in silence. But the difference between us in all these respects is so great, that I feel compelled to go a little further in the examination.

You say, speaking of me ; " He took from the Library and kept in possession for more than eighteen months a large number of valuable books." It is true, I took several volumes from the library and kept them some time, whether it was eighteen months or not I do not know, nor is it at all material. Whether that is a crime or a cause for an excitement, and blaze so uncontrollable as to put you and the church in array against me, and to sweep me from the office of deacon, would depend I suppose somewhat upon the *terms of our association, our bye laws and usages*. I have a much larger number of more valuable books, which I have kept in my possession more than twice eighteen months ; and yet I suppose this latter fact is as good cause of excitement and blaze among my neighbors, and would be as important for the public to know as the one you state in such form for the "*information and gratification of the brethren*."

I proceed with your statement : " He was present at the meeting of the Association, when a resolution was passed to sell the Library and was present also at the vendue of the books. Of the books taken, and considered irregularly kept, he retains to this day, ten volumes of the 'Massachusetts Historical Collections' !"

These important facts are true. I shall deem it important, hereafter, in quoting from you, to tell before offering any remarks upon the quotation, whether your facts are true or not. But of what consequence is it to "the brethren" or the public to know, that I was present when the resolution passed to sell the library. None at all. That fact is out of place. It belongs to the trial of the question as to my right of property in the Edinburgh Reviews, I deposited with the right to resume them. If I was present when the resolution passed to sell the library, and also at the auction, that circumstance it is hoped, would operate as a waiver of my right. But you forgot to state the other important fact, that being present, I protested against any such step as selling my part of the library at auction. And a few days after, when I called your attention to the fact, at the examination of the George Hill school you assured me you remembered it, and should remember it. You are rather premature in arguing this question of property. The evidence is not



all in. And particularly you yourself, have not been cross examined. When I have raised the question to assert my rights, and you have given in your evidence, and been cross-examined, I have no objection to your being employed to argue it. You say, "of the books taken, and considered *irregularly kept*, he retains to this day ten volumes of Massachusetts Historical Collections." I am happy to see your advert in the right place, if it has any right place in your sentence. The "crime" of which I was publicly accused, and which threw you, and the church and town into such a sudden blaze, related to the taking of the books rather than to the *keeping* of them. Now, it seems, the books, are only "*considered*" to be "*irregularly kept*." That is quite a falling off from the original crime!

I shall notice but one more fact in your statement, and that relates to fines. It is the last sentence in your note and stands thus:

"If fines had been exacted of him agreeably to the original regulations, and as other proprietors have paid, it would have added to his debt nearly \$300.00."

That would be a considerable sum to be sure, but I suppose, if I had regularly forfeited it and was bound in law or honor to pay it, it could have been paid; and certainly would have been paid rather than throw this little community into such a general, uncontrollable and almost unprecedented excitement. But upon this point, I beg to offer for your consideration a paragraph from the report of the committee, who investigated so thoroughly the history of the establishment, and devised the means of paying the debts of the proprietors, by selling the whole property for less than one seventh of its cost.

"On the subject of fines, the committee have not undertaken to act in their adjustment of accounts. It has been customary to exact fines for failures to conform to certain regulations as to time of retaining books. Most subscribers have paid such fines; and a considerable sum is now due upon the same principle. This matter is left for the consideration of the proprietors."

The fair meaning of the last sentence of your note quoted above is that I have been alone in withholding fines,—that all others have paid them. Else why am I singled out and held up to public observation? In that sense it is not true; and I offer the above quotation from the report, which you heard read, when it was adopted, to show that you knew it was not thus true. I have paid fines as well as others. I always paid fines, till I determined not to pay more money, whether subscriptions or fines, unless I was allowed to know something of the manner in which the moneys of the proprietors had been and were to be expended. For the last year or two the whole matter was conducted by the proprietors generally with so little regard to any

tem that this scrutinizing committee, in pursuit of means to pay the debts, did not think it worth while to say any thing about fines incurred by any one. They referred the matter to the proprietors, and the proprietors allowed the whole subject of fines to rest uninvestigated. These being the facts as shown above by "authentic records and sources," I cannot but admire your ingenuity, candor, and magnanimity in writing, printing and publishing such a sentence as the one quoted above with the authority of your name. I am much mistaken if such means, resorted to by you as Pastor of our church to justify your course towards me, do not in the end prove anything but "*a gratification to the brethren.*"

I shall not take time or space to offer a single remark upon your mode of keeping, casting, and presenting to the public my account current with the reading room. There are some things very curious to behold in it ; but I cannot persuade myself to dwell longer upon *these small matters*, even with so illustrious an example as yourself. I have however a few words to say upon the occasion of this controversy about the property of the Reading-Room.

The association was formed, as appears above, in 1821, upon the principles stated in the original compact. The Library continued upon this footing precisely till the autumn of 1825, when those proprietors, who happened to be in town, at the time, agreed to change the basis of the compact so as to pay \$5,00 in money instead of subscribing for certain publications, as had been the case up to that time. Most of the proprietors who had not already taken their books, formally and by their signature relinquished their right, secured to them by the original compact, to resume their publications upon ceasing to be members of the association. I was absent from town about two years, including the year 1825, when this new arrangement took place, and never became a party to it. On my return to Lancaster in the spring of 1827, I became a party to the new association, so far as to agree to pay five dollars a year, but did not relinquish my right to resume the property I had *before* deposited, viz; the Edinburgh Review for two and a half years according to the original compact. At the close of the first year of my new membership I paid my subscription of \$5,00, and all the fines I had incurred *in the time*.

All the books to be purchased were selected by one individual, though he had never been entrusted with the responsibility by any act or vote of the proprietors, and all the moneys were paid to him. A large debt of I believe more than \$200,00 stood at the bookstore against the proprietors unliquidated, and no more than one man appeared to know how it happened, or where the means were that should have paid it. No account of the debts, property, and dues had been rendered to the proprietors from the

foundation of the Reading-Room, and it had now been in existence *seven years*. I was not alone in desiring a different state of things in regard to this now valuable Library. By considerable effort a meeting of a large number of proprietors was held in the winter of 1829-30, and a committee was chosen to look into the accounts of the concern and report. No official or satisfactory information could be obtained, however, and the attempt to investigate the condition of the finances proved entirely abortive. One individual, with such advice as *he chose* to take, still made all the selections of books and periodicals for the library. I believe, and I was not alone in the belief, that there was a studied design on the part of a very small number to continue to manage the whole concern, finances, books, and all, without giving account of their doings or holding themselves responsible to the other proprietors. As one of the original proprietors and first movers in the enterprise of establishing such a library, I was decidedly dissatisfied with such a state of things. You of course will not think me unreasonable, for I believe you endeavoured to bring about a different state of things.

It was at this time, and under such circumstances, that I formed and publicly avowed the determination to pay no more money into the concern, till I could know what became of it, and whether the whole library was liable to be sold at any time to pay debts outstanding, when there were funds somewhere to liquidate all debts. As several other proprietors took the same ground for the same reasons, it seemed to me that the accumulated debts against us would necessarily by and by bring out a development of the accounts. You will probably agree with me in thinking that by this time the difficulty had become somewhat personal. Various circumstances had reconciled a majority of the proprietors to the then present state of things, and being of my old patrons in the "academy concern," they were rather unwilling to develop the reading-room affairs upon compulsion, —and especially upon such compulsion! But I remained firm to my purpose, always refusing to pay, but avowing my readiness so to do on a development of the accounts.

There began to be an excitement! I do not think it was a blaze!! But it was so much of an excitement, that you thought it worth while for me to appease it by conceding all I had been contending for. Hence your advice, at the examination of the Alms house school, to return the books, I happened to have out of the library, when it was closed and locked up, as I have described in a former part of my letter. The volumes in my possession were taken out of the library according to the rules and recorded by me against my name in the proper books kept for that purpose. I mentioned in a former part of my letter, that it was a part of your advice, at the Alms house school, to have me state to the committee, who had been appointed to col-

lect and keep in custody the books, my reasons and purposes in withholding those happening to be in my possession. I mentioned also that I adopted this part of your advice, and addressed a note to the committee accordingly. The following is a copy of that note, which, though it was prepared with no expectation it would ever appear in print, I subjoin, to show how well my motives and purposes must have been understood by all.

"Mr. R. K. L.\*\*\*, committee of L. R. R. Sir; Lest my motives should be misunderstood, I herewith send to your care all the volumes of Silliman's Journal, which have recently been in my possession, together with the 2d volume 3d series of Mass. His. Coll. and Hoyt's Antiquarian Researches. I have retained these books as well as those, which I now have, (viz; 10 vols Mass. Hist. Coll. 2d series) in the exercise of what I deem my perfect and unquestionable right. I hold the opinion that I have the same right to lay an embargo upon the books, which happen to be in my possession, as other subscribers have to lock up what happen to be in theirs. I should deeply regret that retaining the books should have had any tendency to retard a full report upon the condition of the library and its concerns: *for no object could be more desirable to the subscribers.*

"Lest my motives should not be understood upon another topic connected with the Reading Room, I beg simply to state, that I have withheld my subscriptions, solely because I was desirous of having its affairs laid before the subscribers; and in view of the history of former proceedings, I knew of no way to accomplish the object but to wait till the debts of the concern should quicken the sensibilities of those interested and hasten the development of affairs so long desired. I was most unwilling and I am determined not to pay my subscriptions till I am permitted to know something of the manner in which the concerns of the Reading-Room have been conducted and are to be conducted for the future.

"If a full and satisfactory report of the concerns of the establishment be made I shall most cheerfully and promptly pay my regular subscriptions up to this time. If such report be not made, I wish it to be understood, that I shall claim, and do hereby claim, my full share of the property of the Reading Room according to what I have paid. I have supposed, and do now suppose, that all the volumes I have recently had in my possession would be much less than a *pro rata* allowance for my subscriptions, but to take away all fear that I have the least intention to wrong the concern, I have returned the volumes mentioned in this note.

Very respectfully yours,

Lancaster, 18th Aug. 1831.

J. G. CARTER."

I had stated these same views to you privately, and you heard this note read at the meeting of those proprietors who voted to sell the library at auction; for you were in the chair. And you heard me offer after the report had been read to conform to the principles above laid down, provided what was personal and invidious in the report should be stricken out, before its adoption. You heard me protest against selling the library or my property in it, and declare I should claim my share according to what I had paid in books. But a resolution was passed by a majority of those present to sell the whole library, which had been collected at a cost of between \$800,00, and 900,00, at auction, for the professed object of paying the debts. The bal-

ance of claims against the library at this time, after deducting all that the committee chose for their own purposes to call bad debts due from individuals ; including something more than \$15,00 due from me, which they knew I should pay when a report was made, did not exceed \$65,00. And to liquidate this debt it was proposed to sell a valuable collection of periodical and other publications at auction in a country village for what they would bring. The books were sold, and according to your calculation of what would be my dividend, brought less than one seventh of their cost ! This was certainly an extraordinary operation and *appears* to be such as men seldom make with their property. But it is susceptible of explanation, which will show after all, at least, the usual care to self-interest. Many of the proprietors in the property held in common, with no very distinct articles of agreement, were now out of town, some were at a great distance, and some never would return. It would certainly be a good operation, if private interest alone were regarded, if all these non-residents and some residents could be dispossessed of their rights in the library, and yet the whole or every thing valuable in it be saved to a small combination of proprietors on the spot. I cannot say this was the true and real object of the sale under such circumstances, but I can say I never could discover any other adequate motive, and that I suspected this was the real object at the time. Moreover, the result of the operation has turned out as I anticipated. The principal standard reviews and other works were bought in by persons, who have since united in bringing their books together to form a new library, which they profess to own to the exclusion of all, who had a right or property in the former library, in which are found the same identical books. If the former and non-resident proprietors choose to call within a year for a dividend of 15 per cent on what they have paid, I presume they can receive it. But at the expiration of a year all funds remaining in the hands of the committee unclaimed, are by the vote of a majority of those proprietors who were present, to be paid over to the Lancaster Lyceum, a kindred institution to the New Library. This is the catastrophe of the Reading-Room !

I have not heard that this outrage upon individual rights, under the color of a vote of a small part of the owners of the late library, has caused any excitement in Lancaster. My resistance to the proceedings above described has, however, produced both an excitement, "*almost* unprecedented," and a blaze, into which you seem very unnecessarily to have rushed in your great alarm and trepidation, drawing your church after you. This whole business of the Reading Room is utterly insignificant, and void of any interest or importance to the public. But the consequences flowing directly from circumstances in themselves so trivial, are deeply momentous to me, if not to

you. "Behold! how great a matter a little fire kindleth," had never a more apposite pertinency than to this case. I believe my remarks in connexion with your statement will enable our brethren of the church, as well as the public, to understand the case without more explanation. If, however, you find in my remarks upon the topic anything "highly colored or calculated to give a wrong impression of the course that has been pursued," and will state what it is, or wherein I shall be liable to mislead any one, I will give you further and more minute explanation. But as you brought the subject before the public by your statement in your second note, and as my remarks above are addressed to you, I beg you to understand that I shall hold myself ready to explain *only* to you.

Having offered what remarks I think necessary, to render perfectly intelligible your proceedings as well as those of the church, against me, antecedent to and including your published Records, Files, and Notes, I proceed now to an examination of the subsequent transactions in the church relating to me down to the present time. Neither your course nor the consequent proceedings of the church will be found to vary essentially either in spirit, matter, or form from those already passed in review. You will recollect that in my account of the church meeting, at which the vote was passed purporting to remove me from office, given in a former part of this letter, I stated, that immediately on the passage of the vote, I rose in my place and protested, again, against the proceedings, and proposed to the brethren "to join me in a mutual council to review the proceedings of the church against me." To avoid repetition I must beg you to turn back to the previous account of that scene, unless your recollections are sufficiently vivid without being thus refreshed.

Soon after the publication of your Records, Files, and Notes, I addressed to the church the following letter, renewing, according to my intimation my former proposition for a mutual council; and designed also to show the reasons for making the proposition in this form for the consideration and action of the church; rather than taking their former silence and neglect of my offer as a distinct refusal. The church, you will recollect, did not act upon or notice my first proposition in any way. Why they did not will appear from my letter.

"To the Church of Christ in Lancaster;

Christian Brethren; whereas, at a meeting of this church July 13, 1832 it was voted; "That Deacon James G. Carter be removed from his office as a Deacon of the Church;" And whereas, I did therefore forthwith propose to the church to join me in inviting a mutual council to review the proceedings of the church against me: And whereas, the Pastor of the church then acting as moderator, did, in his place, declare that the church was in this matter an independent body,—that they had a right to elect their Deacons and they had a right to depose them,—that I was deprived of no church privileges and had no cause of grievance, which

would make it necessary to call a council; and whereas the Pastor seemed to me to assume the extraordinary prerogative of deciding upon the proposition submitted to the church, no member having spoken or acted upon the subject, I did then declare to the church that I should at some future and convenient time renew in form to the church the proposition which I thought and still think had been so unkindly and irregularly thrust aside by the moderator;—Therefore; feeling deeply aggrieved by the said proceedings against me, and believing that I have just cause of grief and for an appeal to our sister churches, I do now renew to the church my former proposition for a mutual council.

Very respectfully, your Christian Brother,  
JAMES G. CARTER.

Lancaster, Oct. 27, 1832.

Having detained the church after public worship, October 28th, you informed them that you had received a communication "from our brother James G. Carter, which you would read." You said before reading it, however, that "you regretted being obliged to call the attention of the brethren to a communication from me, for you thought "the church had received communications enough already from that brother." After reading it you remarked for the information of the brethren that "you were not surprized either at its spirit or its contents, you should not be surprized at anything coming from that brother." This, I presume, was to prepare the church for deliberation and an impartial decision. "As to a mutual council" you continued, "my views of its expediency have been made known to you;" (viz: when the proposition was first made three months before,) "and I remain of the same opinion." "But as important consequences may grow out of this request for a mutual council it may be well to give the subject consideration. Nothing will be gained by acting with haste; and I suggest whether it might not be well to refer the subject to a committee to be joined with or to be associated with the Pastor, and report at some future time." Whereupon, the hint being sufficiently distinct to be understood, a motion was immediately made and seconded to choose a committee for the purpose. As you were putting the question I rose to speak, but you finished putting it and declared it a vote, then turning to me you said we will hear you. I said I rose before the vote was declared, but as it had been declared, I was not in order and should not speak. You said again we will hear you. I replied I could not speak upon a question that had been already decided. You said then we will consider the vote reconsidered. It is no part of my purpose to inquire into the right or propriety of a moderator's undertaking to declare a vote reconsidered, without any consultation or action of the church, who had just voted. But as the vote was declared to be reconsidered, I observed, that I had not the least objection to the church's taking all the time that could be necessary for them to decide upon their course, but I should like to have their decision as soon as was convenient to them. And

it seemed a little remarkable that so much deliberation should be necessary on a question, which had been submitted to them more than three months, when they had proceeded to act upon questions of at least equal magnitude in earlier stages of the proceedings against me, without any deliberation at all. I hoped the church would let me know their decision at as early a time as was convenient to them. You then put the same motion as was before passed by the church, and reconsidered by yourself, and declared it again to be a vote.

You then called for a nomination, and the "Three Deacons" were nominated at once, and declared to be chosen. One of the deacons immediately excused himself, saying he felt a delicacy in acting, as he had hitherto taken no part in the proceedings. You endeavored to obviate his excuse and insisted upon his being of the committee, he again declined but you professed to understand him to yield to your solicitations, and the committee to be associated with the Pastor was formed to take into consideration my proposition for a mutual council and report at a future time. As you were about dismissing the meeting, I rose and said I should be glad of an answer to my proposition and hoped the church would not adjourn without, at least, letting me know when I might expect an answer. Upon your informing the church that you should be absent the next two sabbaths and should wish to be present when the report was made, they could of course do no less than to *postpone the time three weeks*, and the meeting was accordingly thus adjourned. In your remarks upon the propriety and convenience to *yourself* of taking time for deliberation, you said *you should wish to take advice upon the subject*, as it might be of great moment to the church. Though your opinion had been decidedly made up upon my right and the expediency of having a mutual council, you would not say your opinion could not be changed. You were still open to conviction.

I am aware that in making *your record* of the choice and organization of the committee to consider and report upon my request for a mutual council, you *modestly* take no notice of yourself as forming a part or co-ordinate branch of the committee. Though that was in fact the true organization of the committee at the time. You suggested to the church the expediency of choosing a committee to be associated with the Pastor, to consider the subject and report. The motion to choose a committee was immediately made, no objection being stated by the mover, who of course understood the object to be the one you stated in the suggestion, viz ; "to choose a committee to be associated with the Pastor to consider the subject of my request and report at a future time." Moreover, you must have considered yourself as forming part of the committee at the time, or else, why did *you* wish so much delay for *you* to take advice upon the



subject, which was referred to a committee, of which you were not a member. I claim to have represented, above, the choice and organization of the committee with perfect truth and fairness. And I will sustain my account of it, in the face of *your record*, if you dare call the truth and accuracy of my statement in question.

But whether you understood the church to adopt your suggestion in the choice of the committee or not, and however you may have chosen for your own purposes to make your record of the transaction ; you certainly did perform all the duties not only of a member of the committee but of its chairman, except *signing* their report. You called the committee together. You drafted their report. You brought the report to the meeting of the church when it was to be made. You read the report. You did not wait for the other members of the committee to vindicate the principles of the report, when I took the opportunity to say that the authorities, therein referred to, were wholly inapplicable to the point for which they were quoted. I submit to the brethren of the church, who heard you read the report, and depend and sustain its principles by a book of authorities, under your gown, if you did not act much like a chairman of the committee. No other member of the committee ~~said~~ a word about it. Two of the committee I am credibly informed never agreed or disagreed to the report, but endeavored by every means to be excused from having any thing to do with it. They would not at any rate keep silence if the report went the length of expressing the opinion that my request for a mutual council should not be complied with. The whole business was done by yourself, except the report was signed by your aged and devoted friend, Deacon Lane, who allowed you in a former transaction to understand his motion to request me to "*suspend the duties of my office*," to mean, "*resign my office*." These being the facts and circumstances of the case, I trust you will not require any apology; I am sure the public will require none, for my calling the report yours and treating it as yours in my subsequent remarks upon its principles. That I may treat your report with the utmost fairness I shall insert the whole of it in my letter, interspersing such remarks upon its character and principles as I may think due to them and the cause of truth and christian liberty and right. Whoever, therefore, wishes to read your whole report through consecutively, may do so, by passing over my commentaries and remarks.

"The committee, who were instructed by the brethren of the church to take into consideration the request of our brother James G. Carter, that we will join with him in inviting a mutual council to review the proceedings of the church against him, and which ended in his removal from office, of which he complains as grievances ask leave respectfully to report :

—Your committee waive any remarks on the spirit and language of the letter our brother has addressed to this church. We simply observe, that it was only a verbal application for a mutual council made by him on the impulse of the moment, immediately after the vote of the church was

passed to remove him from office. In our opinion it would be highly improper and unwise for a church under such circumstances to receive any other than a written application, specifying the causes of complaint. We are, therefore, constrained to say that on reviewing the course of the Pastor on that occasion, and the opinion expressed by him, we find nothing to justify the insinuations contained in the letter communicated to the church.

As to the "spirit and language" of my letter, I am at loss to understand the nature or extent of my obligations to you for waiving remarks upon them. The letter is given at length above, and upon reviewing it, I find nothing, which is not strictly true in point of fact,—nothing which it was not incumbent upon me to state as a reason for making my application again and in another form,—and nothing of impropriety in language; unless it is improper to state necessary and essential truth in plain and intelligible terms. As to your assertion, that my verbal application for a mutual council was made "on the impulse of the moment" as a reason why it was not entitled to consideration or notice, it is not true in point of fact. I had deliberately and carefully weighed and considered every possible contingency in the courses the church might take, and among these contingencies I had fully anticipated the course they did take. And my proposition was as much a matter of deliberate judgment then, as it was when I wrote my letter or ever can be hereafter. Besides, if that was the reason it was not entitled to any notice from the church, it would have been rather natural for you to say so at the time; if it was not your strict duty as presiding officer to inform me that my proposition could be considered, because it was informal. So far from this, you forthwith went into an argument upon my right to a council and the expediency of acceding to my wishes. Having made no objection to the form of my request at the time, but having at once gone into the subject and decided it upon its merits, independent of its form; it seems rather too late, four months afterwards to report that the question could not be entertained because it was informal, and to assign that as the reason why my proposition was entitled to no notice from the church. As for "a specification of the causes of complaint" being necessary, to entitle my verbal proposition to notice, I was as specific then, as I was in my letter, and as specific as I could be or can be without excluding matter essential to the question. I had in writing and in words protested against the whole proceedings as "irregular according to congregational usage, and unscriptural," and I proposed to invite a council to *review these same proceedings*, and say of course whether they were according to congregational usage and scripture. I do not see how any thing can be more definite or distinct; and I used the same words in my letter. My written request, which has drawn out your elaborate report, prepared with three weeks deliberation and professed consulta-

tion, was just as void for want of specification as my verbal request. The same language was used in both, and the last was only a *renewal* of the first. As to the certificate written by yourself and signed by your friend, Deacon Lane, that on reviewing *your* course and opinions, "*we find nothing to justify the insinuations contained in my letter,*" I beg you not so to pervert language as to talk of "*insinuations*" in this connexion. The very directness and explicitness of my language, I suppose, is what you "*wave remarks*" upon, thus bringing me under obligations for charity and forbearance. I wish you would read my letter again, and see whether its distinct, plain, and undeniable facts, can, with much propriety, be called "*unjustified insinuations;*" which are to be met by your own certificate, signed by Deacon Lane. I proceed with your report:

"Your Committee have examined and weighed the records of the church in relation to this case, which has from the beginning been the subject of our deepest lamentation. We confidently hope that the proceedings will be approved by our fellow christians as marked by kindness, deliberation, and candor. It is familiar to all of us, that many of our brethren desired mutually to deliberate on the subject under consideration.

"At the first meeting, the church adjourned for one month, that there might be time for collecting information. At the expiration of the month, there was a general vote to request our brother to resign his office. The brethren were disposed to grant him the time to deliberate on the request, which he asked, viz., for one fortnight. When this had revolved, affirming that he should not comply with the request to resign his office, the church, as we charitably believe, felt themselves reduced to the painful necessity of removing him from office."

I think our "*fellow christians,*" who have examined and weighed, or may hereafter examine and weigh, your records in this case, will not doubt the depth and sincerity of your lamentation on account of it, whatever opinion they may form of the kindness, deliberation, and candor, which mark the proceedings recorded. As to the desire of many brethren mutually to deliberate, which was so familiarly known, it may be so; but I have seen no evidence of it in their proceedings. And I am quite sure your *diplomatic proposition*, made "*to conciliate and gratify some brethren*" at the first church meeting, did not look much as if *you* wished mutually to deliberate, whatever might be the wishes of many brethren. And now for the evidences of kindness, deliberation, and candor adduced in the last paragraph above quoted. If it was necessary for the church to adjourn a month "*to collect information,*" what had the church been called together for? Would not the information which justified the *calling* of the church, justify the *action* of the church? Did the church really come together and find it necessary to adjourn a month, "*to collect information*" upon the subject of their assembling? And what was the information collected and created in a month appropriated to the object? Why that it was "*the desire*" of two thirds of the half of the church present, "*that Deacon James G. Carter should resign*

his office." Had even the two thirds of one half the church found out they were *dissatisfied* with Deacon Carter? No. For several who *voted* into existence the "said desire," expressed their own personal satisfaction with him. But the step was expedient. It was the only way to get out of the difficulty! It might indeed be expedient, and the best way to get out of the difficulty for you, and perhaps the church,—if it can ever be *expedient* to do evil that good may come. But it was not expedient nor the best way to get out of the difficulty *for me*. The brethren were, indeed, disposed to grant me time to answer their request, but their *Pastor* was not so disposed, and he tried every way in his power to oblige me to give my answer on the spot, or at farthest that afternoon. Who is the *we*, speaking in this report, that charitably believes the church felt reduced to the necessity of removing me from office? You! you alone; or at most, you and Deacon Lane! for the other deacons had taken no part in the business.

The parts of your report quoted above relate merely to a humble individual, and therefore however interesting and important they may be to him, one of small moment to the churches or community compared with what follows,—with the *principle* assumed in the following paragraphs. That I may present the principle to which I allude, and your authorities and arguments to sustain and explain it, in the manner most favorable to you, I shall quote the whole of your report relating to the subject at once.

"Your committee have carefully enquired whether the church had a right to exercise this power. We think we can give the assurance that *it is a right plainly inferred from the scriptures, and justified by the interpretation of them, which we find in the Cambridge Platform, the only statute book generally acknowledged in our churches.* The inference we make from the regulations of the Great Head of the church, is that he designed to leave their application to the discretion of his followers. We find a particular delineation of the traits of character which should appear in officers of a church, as Elders and Deacons. Examples occur of their being chosen and appointed to their office, [1] *but the term of their continuance in office, and the circumstances under which it should be expedient that they should retire from office are left ENTIRELY TO THE CONTROL OF THAT PART OF THE VISIBLE BODY OF CHRIST OF WHICH THEY ARE MEMBERS.* In the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles a special direction is given for the choice of seven Deacons. The character of such as should be chosen is described; their duty pointed out; and the manner of their being clothed with official authority. They are then to enter on the service, and LEFT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE BRETHREN, who were to be guided in all their measures and decisions by the general principles and rules contained in the Gospel.

[2] "If any doubt whether the direction contained in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew was strictly observed in the treatment of our brother, the Committee remind them, that it was a private offence which was contemplated by the Saviour. When the case has already obtained publicity we are of opinion that the following article in the Platform justifies our method of procedure. (Chap. 14, art. 3). We collect the *principle* on which this church has acted from that article. The case is essentially different. We administer no direct, positive censure, for *we could not do*

*this without anticipating the decisions of a civil tribunal. In the article referred to, the highest possible censure is supposed. It is thus expressed: 'If the offence be more public at first and of a more heinous and criminal nature, to wit, such as are condemned by the light of nature, then the church without such gradual proceeding is to cast out the offender from their holy communion, for the further mortifying of his sins and the healing of his soul in the day of the Lord Jesus.'*

[3] "Your committee farther state the power of the church as represented in the Platform, and nothing is found in the Scriptures to invalidate or destroy it. It invests this church with this power towards an Elder or Minister [chap. 10. art. 6.] 'In case an elder offend incorrigibly, the matter so requiring, as the church had power to call him to office, so they have power according to order (the council of other churches, where it may be had directing thereto) to remove him from his office; and being now but a member, in case he add contumacy to his sin, the church, that had power to receive him into their fellowship, hath also the same power to cast him out, that they have concerning any other member.'

[4] "We learn also the authority which the church has respecting the officers of the church collectively. [chap. 8. art. 7.] 'And if the church have power to choose their officers and ministers, then in case of manifest unworthiness and delinquency, they have power also to depose them: for, to open and shut, to choose and refuse, to constitute in office and remove from office, are acts belonging to the same power.'

[5] "The principle which is recognized in [chap. 10. art. 5.] is also worthy of our notice. 'The power granted by Christ unto the body of the church and brotherhood is a prerogative or privilege which the church doth exercise; 1. In choosing their officers, whether Elders or Deacons. 2. In admission of their own members; and therefore there is great reason they should have power to remove any from their fellowship again.'"

I have examined the character of your records of the church in my case sufficiently in other parts of my letter, in what remains, I shall quote them and refer to them, as if they were perfectly true and fair representations of the proceedings of the church as they actually took place. The vote purporting to remove me from the office of a Deacon of the Congregational Church in Lancaster stands upon the records of said Church thus:

"On motion, *Voted*, That Deacon James G. Carter be removed from his office as a Deacon of the Church."

Neither the records nor the files of the church antecedent to this vote show any complaints made or dissatisfaction expressed against the officer,—no allegations of offence, general or specific, proved or even preferred against him. The vote stands upon the records, therefore, to all intents and purposes insulated; effective, if effective at all, by its own inherent majesty and power. It has not even a preamble setting forth its causes and objects, or in any way explaining the motives, which led to its adoption. THE POWER ASSUMED BY THIS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, THEN, IS, TO REMOVE FROM OFFICE, AT THEIR PLEASURE AND IN THEIR OWN WAY, WITHOUT HIS CONSENT, A DEACON, REGULARLY CHOSEN, AND INDUCTED, OR ORDAINED TO HIS OFFICE, WITHOUT COMPLAINT MADE, ALLEGATION PROVED, OR CAUSE ASSIGNED. This is the power, which you assure your church and the churches at large, in your report, is *plainly*

*inferred from the scriptures, and justified by the interpretation of them in the Cambridge Platform.*" The whole argument quoted, above, from your report, and the authorities therein referred to, as well as the subsequent parts of the same report are designed to show and prove that this power is inherent in each and every other congregational church, independent of control or revision by any authority, whether civil, or of the churches assembled in council.

I propose to examine your argument above quoted, paragraph by paragraph, to see how far you have sustained and justified the exercise of this extraordinary power by Scripture and the Cambridge Platform. The figures prefixed to the several parts of my remarks will direct you to the parts of your argument above quoted, to which they particularly refer.

What you infer from, or profess to find in the scriptures relating to the traits of character, which should appear in officers of a church, to the manner of choosing them, and ordaining them to office, is obviously and wholly irrelevant to the case. The church had decided all these questions and performed all these duties, according to scripture and congregational usage, in the election and ordination to office. These powers are not questioned, and no argument from you is necessary to sustain them. The only question at issue relates to the power *thus* to remove an officer thus regularly chosen and ordained. You say (or profess plainly to infer from the scriptures) that [1] "*the term of their continuance in office, and the circumstances under which it should be expedient that they should retire from office are left ENTIRELY to the control of THAT PART OF THE VISIBLE BODY OF CHRIST OF WHICH THEY ARE MEMBERS.*" And a little farther on, you say, that having entered upon their duties, they are "*LEFT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE BRETHREN.*" This, permit me to say, is the very question at issue. Whether the officer is left "*entirely* to the control of *that part* of the visible body of Christ of which he is a member,"—whether he is *thus* "left at the disposal of the brethren," they being the sole and irresponsible judges whose decisions cannot be reviewed upon earth—whether "*they have been guided in their measures and decisions by the general principles and rules contained in the Gospel,*"—it is this inherent power in each and every congregational church, and the right to exercise it in this particular church, in this particular case, which you undertook to prove from the Scriptures and the Platform. The fact that the term of continuance in office is left undefined by the scriptures, is admitted, and it proves the strongest possible tenure of office. It shows that the office was to be held during good behavior, whatever might be the forms of removing, after that essential qualification was lost. Even a council of the churches, at the unanimous request of the brethren, could not remove from office, till they had *shown* that the only condition limiting the term of the office had occurred.

It is certainly remarkable that a man of your reputation and

standing in the churches, should undertake to establish and prove from the scriptures, as you do in the paragraph upon which I am commenting, a new and fundamental principle in ecclesiastical polity, by merely SAYING it is plainly inferred from them ; without referring to one single passage or text from which the principle is so plainly inferred. I call the principle you undertake to establish *new* as well as fundamental; for it has never to my knowledge, and I have endeavored to inform myself upon the subject, been inferred or received or acted upon by any class of christians, known in the history of the Christian Church.

On the contrary, so far from your principle being *plainly* inferred from the scriptures, I am persuaded it cannot be *fairly* inferred at all. But principles diametrically opposed to it, and altogether inconsistent with it, are not only plainly inferred but distinctly taught. For example, contemplate the scene of the selection, choice, and consecration of the first seven deacons, in the sixth chapter of the Acts. "Wherefore, brethren," say the inspired Apostles, "look ye out among you seven men of honest report," &c. "And the saying pleased the whole multitude : and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Procorus and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch ; whom they set before the apostles : and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them." Does this deliberate "looking out among you," and "choosing," and "setting before the Apostles" and the "solemn consecration by prayer and laying on of hands" appear as if the office was of no account and dignity in the view of the Apostles and early disciples of christianity ? Is it plainly to be inferred from this scene, that the *brethren*, who had only followed the direction of the inspired Apostles and "looked out" and "chosen" the Deacons for the Apostles to consecrate and ordain, had, *therefore* the right to *unordain* to *unconsecrate* and dismiss or remove them from their office ; *causâ indictâ*, without assigning any cause either to them or those, who had ordained them to their office ? If your principle in ecclesiastical polity is correct, then, indeed, those *primitive brethren* with whom Stephen happened to be particularly associated might have run together in a fit of excitement the week after the seven deacons had been chosen and ordained, and lifted up some of their hands and "voted, that Stephen be removed from the office of Deacon, and neither Stephen nor the Apostles nor the disciples, who were not present at the removal, could review or appeal from this sudden decision of the "brethren," who happened to constitute a majority of that part of the visible body of Christ of which he was a member. Stephen was indeed at last removed from his office in an excitement, without even the useless form of a vote ; but he was removed by "certain of the synagogue of the libertines,"

who did not *profess* to remove him upon a principle "plainly inferred from the scriptures." And yet it seems to me their principle might be as plainly inferred from the scriptures, as the one which you attempt to establish. Your principle is not plainly inferred from the scriptures. It is unnatural, it is absurd, it is monstrous!

The plain inference from the scene quoted from the Acts of the apostles above, is, that the office of deacon was one of dignity, of responsibility, and honor. And that having been regularly chosen and consecrated, and having entered upon their duties, whatever they may have been, they were not left *entirely* to the control of that part of the visible body of Christ of which they happened at the time to be members,—not left at the irresponsible, supreme and final disposal, of the *brethren*, without appeal or review. Wherever the office is mentioned in the New Testament it is always in terms implying dignity, respect and responsibility. "They that have used the office of a Deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree" [1 Tim. iii. Chap. 13 verse.] Other officers as well as Pastors or Teachers in the primitive and early ages of christianity were frequently called Elders, and they are sometimes called so now. The name Elder has but recently in the history of the church been appropriated to the Pastor. The following passages, therefore, from scripture, are pertinent as showing the character of the other class of officers which we now denominate Deacons. "Rebuke not an Elder, but entreat him as a father," [1 Tim. v. chap. 1 verse]. "Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor." [1 Tim. v. chap. 17 verse]. "Against an Elder receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses" [1 Tim. v. chap. 19 verse].

These are some of the parts of scripture, from which I plainly infer that the office of Deacon was one of consequence and dignity in the church; and therefore not likely to be left to the *entire* and independent control of the brethren, especially while the characters to be chosen, the manner of choice, and the ceremony of induction or consecration indicated such cautious circumspection and solemnity. Deacons were chosen with as much deliberation as any class of officers in the church. They were as much ordained to their office as Elders, Evangelists, Presbyters or Bishops. Even since the settlement of New England and within the memory of living men, Deacons were ordained by prayer and the laying on of hands as much as Pastors. And I find no authority in the Scriptures direct or fairly and plainly to be inferred for making the tenure of the office of Deacon less sacred than that of Pastor or any other officer in the church. By what authority, direct or implied, or by what reasoning do you infer that a Pastor cannot be removed or deposed even with good cause alleged and proved, without the advice and consent of a council of the churches, and that a



Deacon may be deposed without any cause alleged or proved, not only without the consent and advice of a council of the churches, but without the right of appeal to or review by the churches? Wherever this principle may come from, or from whatever it may be inferred, I am quite sure it is not found in, and cannot be fairly inferred from the scriptures. Your argument then to establish your new and fundamental principle in ecclesiastical polity by reference to the scriptures amounts to no more than this: You say it is plainly inferred, without mentioning any passage or text from which it may be thus inferred. This mode of reasoning recognises the modern doctrine,—“As I UNDERSTAND IT,” which has been announced recently from a high political authority. The principle you would establish you infer from the scriptures, *as you understand them*; without allowing to any other man or body of men the right to apply their understanding to the subject, to review or overrule your judgment.

I have said all that can be necessary upon that branch of your argument, which relates to the scriptures as sanctioning the principle which you have assumed, and which I controvert. I pass to your reference to the Cambridge Platform, as sustaining your principle and the action upon it, by this congregational church.[2] You very justly anticipated that doubts would arise in all fair, honest and reflecting minds, whether the directions laid down in Matthew 18th, for proceeding against “moral” offenders, had been followed in my case, and you endeavour to meet and obviate them by the following quotation from the Platform. “If the offence be more public at first and of a more heinous and criminal nature, to wit, such as are condemned by the light of nature, then the church without such gradual proceedings is to cast out the offender from their holy communion, for the mortifying of his sins and the healing of his soul in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

From this passage in the Platform, you “*collect the principle, on which this church has acted.*” Your ingenuity in collecting such a principle from such a passage, is certainly not among the least remarkable things in these remarkable proceedings, in the Congregational Church in Lancaster. The palpable, and total irrelevancy of the authority to the point it is brought to sustain, makes the reference an insult to the humblest understanding. Can you not, do you not see the difference, immeasurably wide and deep, between the *principles* as well as *cases*. The analogy between the authority and the point you wish to sustain fails in at least two essential particulars. I. The authority supposes an offence public, heinous, criminal; such as would be condemned by the light of nature. Do you mean to tell the church and the community that I have been guilty of such an offence, and assume its truth and reality as perfectly notorious? No. You do not believe a word of it. Neither

you nor any other responsible man or body of men, have dared or now dare to charge any offence, public or private, as the basis of your proceedings. And yet your authority presumes one of the darkest die, whose truth is perfectly notorious! II. The second essential point in which the analogy fails is, that the brother, (not an officer) thus notoriously guilty *SHALL BE cast out from the holy communion*; that is, excommunicated. You bring this to justify your mode of procedure, that is, you make it mean an officer thus guilty *MAY BE removed from his office*, being still left with all his privileges as a christian brother unimpaired by the process. I do not think it worth while to spend any more time upon the pertinency of this reference to the Platform to sustain either the *case* or the *principle*. I should just as soon think of quoting the Decalogue to justify idolatry, murder, or theft.

[3] Your next authority from the Platform is this. "In case an elder *offend incorrigibly*, the matter so requiring, as the church had power to call him to office so they have power according to order (*the council of other churches, where it may be had directing thereto*) to remove him from his office; and being now but a member, in case he *add contumacy to his sin* the church that had power to receive him into their fellowship, hath the same power to cast him out, that they have concerning any other member." I agree with you that there is nothing found in scripture to invalidate this power of the church. But then it is not the power, whose exercise you bring it to justify. It bears no resemblance to the power assumed by your principle. On the contrary, it is of itself, a full, conclusive, and triumphant refutation of your principle. I admit the analogy between the tenure of the offices of Deacon and Elder or Minister, which you must admit before you can make even any plausible use of the quotation. And then what is the principle inculcated or laid down in the Platform? It is this. If the officer (whether Deacon or Pastor) *offend incorrigibly*, the church *may*, if a council of churches direct thereto, remove him from his office. In the first place he must *offend incorrigibly*. In the next place *a council of the churches, if it can be had, must direct to the measure*. Can any language more plainly refute and put to shame your assumed principle? You charge no offence corrigible or incorrigible, you invite no council of the churches to see if they will direct to the measure, and refuse and deny the right and power of a council not only to direct but to review the proceeding. If I had no ground but this authority, quoted by yourself, by which to refute your principle, and by which to put you wholly in the wrong, I might safely rely upon this for both purposes. I do not know what estimate you form of the understanding of your church, but I should think you presumed quite as far as would be safe upon their ignorance and forbearance, by offering such an authority to sustain such proceedings.

[4] The next authority quoted from the Platform is this. "And if the church have power to choose their *officers and ministers*, then in case of manifest unworthiness and delinquency, they have power also to depose them: for to open and shut, choose and refuse, to constitute in office and remove from office, are acts belonging to the same power." This passage, from the Platform, you adduce to show "the authority which the church has respecting the officers of the church collectively." So that it proves obviously upon its face, as well as by your admission, just the same authority in the church over the tenure of the office of Pastor as over that of the office of Deacon. Now *the mode of exercising this authority* is particularly specified and laid down in the Platform [chap. 10. art. 6.] as quoted by yourself. It is this; in case an "*Elder offend incorrigibly*," or [chap. 8. art. 7.] in case of "*manifest unworthiness and delinquency*" in *officers and ministers* of the church; then, the offence being incorrigible, or the unworthiness and delinquency being manifest, the church may, "the matter so requiring," "according to order," "*the council of other churches where it may be had, directing thereto*," remove the officer, whether Deacon, Elder, Pastor, or Minister, from his office. The power to choose and to depose, to open and to shut, to choose and to refuse, to constitute in office and to remove from office, is, indeed, vested in the church, not in the brethren of a church, by the Platform. But then the *mode of exercising this power* is also laid down, and is as much law, or a rule of action to the church, as the guarantee of the power itself. The same law, which gives the power, prescribes the form of using it. And you cannot call the law good and valid just so far as it gives the power, and pronounce it void and of none effect, so far as it prescribes the mode of exercising it. Your new and fundamental principle in church polity, claims, for the brethren of a church to exercise the whole power, disregarding all the prescribed forms of exercising it.

If you admit the authority of the Platform as giving the power, as you do, and I do, then I have a right to hold you to the same Platform as prescribing the mode of exercising the power. And by that, I show your proceedings to be wholly wrong and irregular from the beginning. To say nothing of all the proceedings antecedent to the vote purporting to remove me from office; you had no right, either from the scriptures or the Platform, to call for such a vote, and my brethren had no right to give such a vote, claiming for it any validity, till they were not only satisfied of some offence or delinquency in me, but till they were also satisfied that I was, due means having been used, incorrigible; nor even then, till they and you, if you were unanimous in the proceeding, had satisfied a council of the churches, if it could be had, both of my offence and incorrigibility, and they, the council, had "*directed*" to the measure. This is the mode

of exercising the power which you claim, from the scriptures and the Platform, distinctly prescribed by the same scriptures and Platform.

This favorite doctrine, upon which you have so strongly relied, is altogether false and delusive. *The brethren have a right to elect to office, therefore the brethren have a right to remove from office.* This doctrine thus stated has, perhaps, satisfied some of the brethren of the Congregational Church in Lancaster, that their proceedings are perfectly canonical and regular. But nothing can be more diverse than the premises and conclusion of the proposition; if it means, as *the brethren* suppose, that they have a right to remove at their own time, and *in their own way*. Let us see for a moment how the principle, as *you understand it*, would operate in other cases. The people have a right to choose a Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, *therefore* the people have a right to depose him. And suppose the people, in the legitimate and due exercise of their right to elect, have chosen a Governor, and that the Governor has entered upon the duties of his office. The people have elected, and the people may depose. And suppose the people in the exercise of their deposing power should, "on motion, vote" by holding up their hands in their primary assemblies where they chose the Governor by ballot, in a month after he had entered upon his duties, that Gov. LEVI LINCOLN be removed from his office as Governor of the Commonwealth! Would the functions of the Executive, *ipso facto*, from that moment, cease? Or to take another example; a company of militia have a right to choose their officers, *therefore*, they have a right to depose them. And suppose they choose by ballot in the prescribed form, a Captain, and the choice is consummated by a commission, and the officer enters upon his duties. The company have a right to elect and *therefore* the company have a right to depose. And suppose the company in the exercise of their deposing power, as *they understand it*, should "on motion," shoulder muskets the first parade day and "vote, that Capt. \_\_\_\_\_ be removed from his office of Captain of this company." Would the functions of the Captain, *ipso facto*, from that moment, cease!

It cannot be needful, that I should multiply examples of the absurdity of attempting to draw your conclusion from your premises, however well the proposition may sound. The broad and naked fallacy of your reasoning consists in disregarding the *mode of exercising* the deposing power, which is correlative with the electing power. The same constitution and laws, which guarantee to the people the right to elect their Governor, also prescribe the mode by which the people may depose him; viz. by impeachment for good cause alleged and proved. The same

constitution and laws which secure to the company of militia the right to elect their Captain, also prescribe the mode by which the Captain may be deposed; viz. by a regular court-martial. The same authority, which guarantees the right to elect in both cases, prescribes the mode of deposing in both, viz. the constitution sanctioned by the sovereign power, the people. So the Platform of the Churches, which embodies the fundamental principles of congregationalism as adopted by the brethren, who are the source of power in the church, prescribes the *mode of deposing* officers as well as secures the right to elect them. The new and fundamental principle, which you undertake to establish, and upon which the congregational church under your care has acted, is complete and thorough nullification. It breaks up and scatters to the winds the fundamental law of congregationalism. For, if the brethren of your church, or of any other church, may exercise the powers guaranteed to them by the fundamental law, as *they or you choose to understand them*, without the right of appeal or review by the other churches, in the prescribed mode; then, indeed, is the fundamental law of congregationalism *quo ad hoc*, broken up, nullified, destroyed.

[5] The next principle quoted in your report from the Platform is this: "The power granted by Christ unto the body of the church and brotherhood is a prerogative or privilege which the church doth exercise; 1. In choosing their officers, whether Elders or Deacons. 2. In admission of their own members, and, therefore, there is great reason they should have power to remove any from their fellowship again." You say this principle is worthy of notice in this connexion. With proper deference to your opinion, the authority does *not* appear to be worthy of any notice at all as tending to establish your new principle in ecclesiastical polity. The right of choosing Elders or Deacons is not under discussion; nor the right of admitting members to communion each church for itself; nor yet the correlative of the latter right; viz; the right of removing from their fellowship again, any member they may have received to their fellowship before. The authority therefore is wholly and totally irrelevant to any proceeding of the church or any principle of action, or mode of action, which has been passed in review.

I have now completed my analysis of your argument to prove from the scriptures and the Platform of the Congregational Churches, that *the brethren of each and every church have the power to remove from office, at their pleasure, in their own way, without his consent, a deacon, regularly chosen and inducted or ordained to his office, without complaint made, allegation proved, or cause assigned.* I now proceed to the second main branch of your report; which indeed was the only subject referred to the committee; viz; a congregational church having exercised such a power, whether the aggrieved officer has a right to an

appeal, and a review of the proceedings against him by a council of the churches. The following is the whole of your argument upon this topic.

"Your committee have also considered the subject of calling a council, which is referred to them. After consulting ecclesiastical usage and the common opinion, we state what appears to us to be the power of a mutual council. It is in the church what a rule of court is in civil concerns; with this distinction only, that in things relating to religion and the discipline and government of the church, no measure is admissible which is in its nature compulsory. If a cause is submitted to a mutual council, the parties should consider themselves bound by propriety and a sense of obligation to acquiesce in the decisions of the council. In view of our present state, we refer it to the brethren to decide on the expediency of a measure, to which they are not obliged by any law of the gospel or ecclesiastical usage.

"Your committee have likewise examined the cases mentioned in the Platform, in which councils are to be called, and in which the proceedings of one church are to be taken cognizance of by other churches. The second provision is the only one immediately touching the case. It is thus expressed. [Chap. 15, art. 2] 'By way of consultation one with another, when we have occasion to require the judgment and counsel of other churches, touching any person or cause wherewith they may be better acquainted than ourselves. As the church at Antioch consulted with the Apostles and Elders of the church at Jerusalem about the question of circumcision of the Gentiles, and about the false teachers that broached that doctrine.' This council at Jerusalem is the only one of which the Gospel particularly informs us."

These two paragraphs embrace the whole of your argument upon the subject referred by the church to the committee of which you are the organ; viz, the expediency of complying with my request for a mutual council. The view you take in the first paragraph of the character of a mutual council, whether you collected it from ecclesiastical usage or the common opinion, is undoubtedly correct. The churches whether singly or collectively have no power either civil or ecclesiastical to call out the *posse comitatus* to enforce their decrees. The churches in no form make such a pretension. The decisions or results of ecclesiastical councils are called *advice*, plainly intimating that there is no physical-compulsion in reserve to enforce them. They are addressed wholly to the reason and consciences of men, who have professed to have reason and conscience to rule over them. To say that the decision of an ecclesiastical council therefore is not obligatory upon the parties, because it is not to be enforced by physical power, is to say, that the parties deny the power of reason and conscience as controlling and governing their actions, and mean to be controlled and governed by physical power alone. When men publicly profess the religion of Jesus, and form themselves into communities or churches upon a common basis, plan, or platform, recognising certain common and general principles of faith, government, and discipline; they become morally and religiously bound to abide by and be governed by those principles. There are obligations I trust recognised among christians besides the obligations that can be enforced

by physical power. You say the parties ought not to submit a question to a council, unless they mean to abide by the decision of the council. That is undoubtedly correct. You then *assume* that the decision or advice of a council upon the question proposed would not be obligatory upon the church by any law of the Gospel or ecclesiastical usage; and very correctly infer from such premises that it would not be expedient to agree to submit such a question to a council. I take this to be the meaning of the two last sentences of the paragraph, upon which I am remarking. It is the only meaning I can extract from them, though I admit that they are abundantly dark and ambiguous. Your conclusion is correctly drawn from your premises, and would be conclusive upon the question of submitting to a council, if the premises themselves were true. But you assume in the premises, though the premises are ingeniously placed last in the paragraph, an important part of the question I proposed to submit to a council. I proposed a council "to review the proceedings of the church," which I protested against as "irregular according to congregational usage, and unscriptural," to see and say whether the proceedings were according to congregational usage and scripture. You meet my proposition by saying the church would not be bound "by any law of the Gospel or ecclesiastical usage" to regard the decision or advice of a council, upon this question, and therefore, the question ought not to be submitted to a council by the church. Your premises are not true. The decision or advice of a council, would be obligatory upon the church, unless they deny all obligation except physical obligation. How could any differences, whether of faith, government, or discipline, among brethren, be submitted to a mutual council, if one party have only to *say* the churches have not cognisance of the question, and there is an end of it?

The question I proposed is clearly by the fundamental principles of congregationalism within the cognisance of a council of the churches. It is clearly proved to be so, by one of the authorities you quoted from the Platform, upon which I have before remarked. At any rate, unless you mean to place the church in Lancaster upon her reserved rights, and consequently without the pale of congregationalism, you ought upon every principle to have joined me in inviting a council. The first inquiry by the council might have been, if you raised the question, Have we, by the principles of congregationalism, cognisance of the subject submitted? You say they have not. I say they have. Let us reason together then before the council, upon this preliminary step. If the council should decide that they have no cognisance of the question, they would say so, and there would be an end of the matter. If they decide the other way, you would be bound to proceed to an investigation of the subject

submitted, unless you place yourself without the pale of congregationalism. You have not avoided nor evaded the question by refusing to accede to my proposition; you have only compelled me to resort to another method of raising the question before the churches, which will be equally in accordance with the principles of congregationalism. And the decision of the churches in this form of presenting the question will be equally canonical and equally obligatory upon you and your church. You may indeed refuse to abide by a decision of the churches or to take the advice of a council; but by so doing, you deny a fundamental principle of congregationalism, and virtually secede from the sister churches.

In regard to the topic of your second paragraph, last above quoted, permit me to say, I also "have examined the cases mentioned in the Platform, in which councils are to be called and the proceedings of one church taken cognizance of by other churches; and I can assure you that you have but poorly presented the authority of the Platform upon the subject, in your partial extract from one minor head of a general view of the subject. I have examined also some other authorities and commentators upon ecclesiastical polity, and I am very sure that the short paragraph you quote in your report does not present *all* the cases in which councils are to be called. But as I am not writing an essay upon ecclesiastical polity, but merely reviewing your report, I shall not here enter into the discussion further than may be necessary for my avowed purpose. The only provision *you* find in the Platform touching the case, that is, the occasions for calling a council, is the following. "By way of consultation one with another, when we have occasion to require the judgment and counsel of other churches touching any person or cause wherewith they may be better acquainted than ourselves." This being the only occasion, as you have it, in which a council is to be called, the church in Lancaster having no occasion to require the judgment or counsel of other churches, no other churches being better acquainted with the subject than the church in Lancaster; *therefore*, we have no occasion, and it is not expedient, to join in inviting a mutual council to review our proceedings. I believe this is a fair representation of your authority and your reasoning from it. This is all wrong, premises, conclusion, and all. That is not the only occasion for calling a council. And if it was, are you quite sure that some other churches might not be better acquainted with the question I proposed for a council than "ourselves" the church of Lancaster. The question relates to fundamental principles in ecclesiastical polity. Possibly some other churches might throw light upon the subject. We are prevented from observing and judging correctly of the size and proportions of objects as well by their being too near our eyes as by their being too remote. And I have thought it



possible that the Records of the recent proceedings of the Church in Lancaster might be viewed as clearly and judged of as correctly, at a moderate distance, as they could be by "ourselves," enveloped as we are, in blazing atmosphere. You would as effectually cut off any appeal to a council on this authority as on those before remarked upon. A council may only be called when they know more of the subject than "ourselves." But they do not know more than ourselves in this case, *therefore*, the occasion for a council has not occurred. Now if one party may always judge whether a council will be able to throw light upon a question, I do not see how the other party can ever have the benefit of a mutual council's advice.

The following are the principles in ecclesiastical polity, which you consider yourself as having established by the authorities adduced from the scriptures and the Platform, and your reasoning upon them in your report as quoted at length in this letter.

"Your committee will now sum up the principles, *which have been stated and which are all found in the scriptures and in the Platform, viz.*

1. The election and dismissal of all officers in the church are delegated to the church: We only except the dismissal of a minister, which has been specified, and in which a council, if it can be obtained, is to be called.

2 This church has not in the removal of an officer exceeded the powers given and secured to churches.

3. A mutual council is to be called when a council is needed to shed light upon the subject in agitation; and when there is greater probability that correct information will be found, and a correct judgment formed abroad than at home."

After the analysis of your argument to establish these principles from scripture and the Platform, into which I have entered in my preceding review of your report, it cannot be necessary that I should devote much time or space to a particular examination of the character, tendency, and bearing of the principles themselves. They are certainly important,—very important,—fundamental principles in ecclesiastical polity, of direct and weighty bearing upon the character and interests of the churches. Especially have they a bearing upon the tenure of the office of one of the two classes of officers known in congregational churches, which gives them a fearful importance to that class of officers in particular, if not to the whole congregational church at large. The intrinsic importance of the several principles above laid down by you,—the occasion which has brought them before the public,—the source from which they originate,—and their practical recognition, in advance, by one congregational church,—all conspire to give them interest and consequence, not only to the churches at large, but to the community at large, whose well being depends in no inconsiderable degree upon the welfare of the churches. Whatever, therefore, may be the view taken of these principles, here-

after ; they will not soon be forgotten. Whether true or false, legitimate or spurious, they will attach, for honor or for shame, indelibly to their source.

The first principle advanced by you is, all officers in a church may be dismissed by that church alone, without the advice or direction of a council, *except* ministers or pastors. This seems to be a general proposition; but, Deacons and Pastors being the only classes of officers known in the congregational church, it means no more nor less than this : Deacons may be dismissed from their office, by the brethren of a church, without the advice or direction of a council; but Pastors cannot, if a council may be had. Against this principle, I refer to the choice, consecration, and character of the first officers of this class, when the office was instituted by the inspired Apostles ; I refer to the uniform language used in the Scriptures in speaking of the office; I refer to the current history of the church in all ages; to show that the tenure of the office of Pastor has no greater degree of sacredness attached to it than that of Deacon or any other class of officers known in the history of the universal church. And I refer, as conclusive upon the subject, to the whole tenor of the Cambridge Platform, and particularly to one of the authorities you yourself have quoted. All go to show that the tenure of office is the same in both cases; and I enter my humble protest, since it devolves upon me as the first victim of the new principle, against the innovation and distinction you attempt to introduce.

In regard to your second principle, that "this church have not, in the removal of an officer, exceeded the powers given and secured to the churches," permit me, as one of the parties, to say; this is the very question at issue, whether they have exceeded their power. You cannot for a moment think, that a vote of the party charged with offending against the laws of congregationalism, that they have not so offended, settles the question. Suppose six men, are charged with conspiring to destroy the character, happiness and usefulness of one other man; would a vote of the supposed offenders, that the court had no jurisdiction of the case, prove their innocence, or destroy the jurisdiction of the court? The cases are perfectly parallel so far. If the conspirators, who have voted their own innocence, refuse submission to the decision of the court, *physical power* would coerce them to obedience. But if the party offending against ecclesiastical laws refuses submission to the decisions of the proper ecclesiastical tribunal, the party so offending and so refusing, only says in substance that they have not the reason and conscience to rule over them, which they profess, and they choose to abandon these rules and place themselves without the pale of congregationalism. Which sanction would have the graver weight with reflecting men and professed christians, I leave with each to judge for himself.

Your third principle has a more local and personal bearing than the others, though it is hardly less remarkable. "A mutual council is to be called when a council is needed to shed light upon the subject in agitation." You do not inform the church whether a council may or must be called for any other purpose than to shed light upon the subject in agitation. And what is the subject in agitation? The tenure of the office of Deacon. That in substance is the question I proposed to submit. The subject in agitation is not, at all, whether I ought to be removed from the office of Deacon; but whether it had been done according to scripture and congregational usage. The subject in agitation was not my personal qualifications for the office, nor my general character, nor any particular transaction of my life. The church had not raised a question in any stage of their proceedings upon any of these subjects; and, therefore, I had no need to submit any of these subjects to the consideration of a council. The question I proposed to submit to a mutual council related wholly to the tenure of the office of Deacon. And that question would remain unaffected, though I might be as pure as a saint or guilty of all the crimes enumerated in the decalogue. You greatly misrepresent the case, when you give as a reason why a mutual council should not be called, that a council is needed only when "there is greater probability that correct information will be found, and a correct judgment formed abroad than at home," if you mean by this to convey the idea that my character or qualifications for the office had anything to do with the question proposed to be submitted. The proceedings of the church, which I wished to have reviewed, do not *purport* to affect my character or to be based upon any personal qualification or disqualification for the office. On the contrary they *profess* to leave my character unassailed, by leaving me in the full possession of all the privileges of a christian brother, unaccused, unproved, and in perfectly good standing among my brethren. We could not certainly need light from abroad to enable the church at home to see my character. The church never professed to have changed their views or to be in darkness or doubt about it. For ought I know from their *professions*, I stand as well with my brethren now as I did when they unanimously elected me to my office. But they have thought it expedient for causes known only to themselves to vote to remove me from my office, because the church have a right to elect, and therefore the church have a right to depose. And it was "the desire" of a majority at that particular time that I should not be a deacon of the church any longer. They may change their "desire" if that is all the cause necessary to move in the business, and elect me to the office again. The records of the acts of the

church would not show that, in the opinion of my brethren, I was not a very suitable person for the office.

Having gone through with the material parts of your report, I quote the remainder of it, which purports to assign the reasons of the Deacons for not giving an opinion upon the subject committed.

"Having thus stated the result of our inquiries, we are persuaded that the brethren will excuse us if we refer it to them to decide on the expediency of this church complying with the request of our brother James G. Carter, that they will unite with him in inviting a mutual council. We are willing to state the reasons of our silence on this subject. We have been associated with him as Deacons, and have, from motives which we believe our brethren will duly appreciate, not been forward in taking an active part in the proceedings of this church. We assure the brethren that whatever may be their decision, they may rely on our acquiescence, and that it is our great desire and prayer, that the reputation, peace, and prosperity of this church and society may be as lasting as their existence."

Your report, closing with this paragraph, purports, in the copy which I have, to be submitted "with christian affection, by Jonas Lane, for the committee." The brethren decided the question thus thrown back upon them, without a distinct opinion upon its expediency, by the committee, to whom they had before referred it for that very purpose, by the following vote:

"Voted—that this church will not comply with the request of their brother James G. Carter to join with him in inviting a mutual council to review their proceedings against him."

The true explanation for the seeming inconsistency in the report, in going into such an elaborate argument, drawn from the Scriptures, the Platform, ecclesiastical usage, and the *common opinion*, without giving any opinion upon the subject investigated, is, that two of the three deacons had not only not been forward in taking an active part in the proceedings, but they had not taken any part at all by a vote or the expression of an opinion *in their favor*. If your report had gone the length of expressing the opinion, which all its arguments go to sustain, that the church should not agree to a mutual council, the two deacons, I am well persuaded, could not have been prevailed upon by you, on any consideration to keep silence, while the brethren could adopt the report and the necessary vote of refusal of my request. The allusion to motives of delicacy in the proceeding is ingeniously framed and introduced for these two officers. Such a motive would be wholly inapplicable to the other officer whose name the report bears. And he would be the last man in the world to profess it for himself. I have thought this brief explanation of the real composition of the committee necessary, in order to explain the monstrous inconsistency, which appears upon the face of the report; that the deacons should feel no delicacy in advancing such an elaborate

and learned argument to convince the church of the expediency of adopting a particular opinion, and at last think of the delicacy of their former relation to me, only when they came to the conclusion of the report, when it was necessary to tell the church what they had proved or attempted to prove by their argument.

I have now completed, in the best manner I have been able to do, the most irksome and painful duty, which has ever devolved upon me, in the history of my relation to and intercourse with men. But if I have not altogether mistaken the bearing of your recent proceedings, it was a duty, to the performance of which, I was impelled by every virtuous motive, which could operate upon the ingenuous mind. I seemed to myself to have no alternative but to rest under imputations of the gravest and most disgraceful character, direct and implied, cast upon me by you personally, and by the acting majority of the church under your care, and published to the world, with the united authority and sanction of your own name and the official records of the congregational church in Lancaster. The attitude in which I found myself placed before the community, by circumstances wholly beyond my control, though altogether and obviously within your own, not only invited, but imperiously demanded my appearance before the public, unless I was prepared to abandon forever my character without even an effort to rescue it from the ignominy and disgrace attempted to be fixed upon it by you. With what deep and sincere reluctance I have at last appeared before the public, may be judged and inferred by the patience, and forbearance, with which I have suffered my character to be assailed, my motives to be impeached, my prospects of honor and usefulness to be impaired, and my private happiness and domestic relations in society to be cut off; by these and by other means and machinations altogether similar to those, now detailed, steadily pursued for a series of years. I had practiced the policy you so strongly recommended, of evasion of points at issue and concession of important rights, and submission to abuse without rebuke, for several years of the most valuable part of my life. I had turned up my cheeks, with apostolic meekness, to be smitten, till the vulgar and profane had come to claim it as a right, and the idle and profligate had made it their pastime and amusement. At last, my prospects of usefulness, honor, and happiness being thus impaired, they were threatened to be utterly annihilated by your adopting and leading the church to adopt the slanderous imputations which both you and they had before resisted. Not satisfied with destroying or attempting to destroy by such combined efforts all the other interests and prospects which men hold dear; my moral character is at length attacked by you with the united strength of the church of Christ in Lancaster with their Pastor at their head.

Such an attack, made by such means, and at such a time, and from a quarter so respectable and responsible, certainly, left me no alternative but to be virtually annihilated, or put myself upon defence in the only way left to me. I have endeavored to meet the shock with firmness; and to defend myself with the humble ability I possess, though I am very well aware, how much it falls short of the demands of the exigency, in which I have been placed. Though I have endeavored to make my defence as thorough and complete as I was able against every point you have assailed either directly or by implication, I trust I have not gone beyond. I have not followed your example by bringing into the controversy any new matter. I have only analyzed and explained the topics introduced by yourself. If I had felt at liberty to go beyond the rule I prescribed to myself, I should not have wanted occasions or materials for introducing grounds of attack as well as of defence. As you have repeatedly introduced new matter for no other object that I can conceive of but to be prejudicial to me, without any provocation or allusion on my part, and that too while some of my facts before stated in explanation and vindication of myself against your insinuations, were yet staring you in the face, unanswered, unimpeached, and unexplained, you will pardon me, if I decline to turn round to meet your batteries from any new quarter, till you have endeavored at least to reconstruct some, which you have before opened upon me, and which it seems to me I have somewhat shattered if not utterly demolished.

In regard to the new principle in ecclesiastical polity relative to the tenure of the office of Deacon in a congregational church which you have introduced to the consideration of the churches, and sustained by an elaborate report, I shall not, I cannot, without a gross dereliction of duty, allow the question to rest where it is. I shall, at my earliest convenient time *present* the question for the consideration of the congregational churches, by an *exparte* council, which is the only way that remains, by our constitution and laws, for raising the question for argument and decision. In this duty, I am influenced, I trust, by considerations altogether different from those of a personal nature. My personal interest and even the interest to you or the church in Lancaster are swallowed up immeasurably deep in the high and important bearing of the principle in question upon the welfare of the church at large and the community. If your principle is correct and receives the sanction of the churches, then indeed the tenure of the office of Deacon is less sacred than that of the very humblest civil office for the administration of municipal affairs. If a vote by a majority of uplifted hands, in a meeting of the brethren not called for the purpose, is all that is necessary to cause the functions of that hitherto sacred, responsible, and dignified office to cease, then indeed it is important that the incumbents of the office throughout the congrega-

tional church at large, should be apprised of the tenure of their office, and that candidates and aspirants for the office should know the danger of the situation. Dangerous it certainly is, if the incumbent is liable to be deposed from an office, to which a community of descendants of the pilgrims attach so much dignity, importance, and respect, in a fit of momentary or temporary excitement, with no cause assigned more weighty in matter or solemn in form, than a vote of a majority of uplifted hands, that it is their present desire the functions of the office should cease. What man of any self-respect, forecast, or knowledge of the caprices of human nature, would trust his reputation and character in so hazardous a place ; defenceless and inviting to the attacks of the enemies of all the external forms of christianity ? What would be the jeopardy, the absolutely miserable condition of all that class of officers in the congregational churches of New-England, if it was perfectly understood by the brethren and known in the community, that the process of deposing a deacon was so easy and so summary. Suppose, for example, the antimasonic *excitement* should pervade a community in which was a congregational church of a limited number of brethren, and there are many such churches and communities around us, and suppose a deacon of the church should be so unfortunate as to be a mason, how long think you would he hold his office in the *excitement*, if a majority of votes of the few brethren, subject to the influence of the excited community around them, were all that should be necessary to appease the excitement by his removal. This is only an illustration of the danger of your principle. Who does not know and understand the liability of every community to temporary excitements, from religious and political causes, and even from local causes of a less permanent nature !

Upon this principle in ecclesiastical polity, a few *brethren*, to whom the exemplary purity of their deacon might be a standing and pungent rebuke, could conspire to depose him, to disgrace him, to ruin his character, under the sanctions of the forms of a church of Christ, when their machinations would otherwise be punishable at civil law. And if the congregational churches should undertake to carry out the principle and expose that large class of their officers to its full effects, it does not require great sagacity to foresee, constituted as men and communities are of inflammable passions, and inveterate prejudices, as well as reason and moral worth, that the time is not distant, when either the office will become extinct, or the civil authority will interfere to disperse a combination so dangerous to individual character and rights. It cannot be that the churches will sanction a principle in their laws or usages, which would enable a few brethren to do under color of the church what they would be punishable for at civil law as a combination or

conspiracy to destroy private character and reputation without such color of justification.

Viewing the principle in this light, and apprehending from it the most dangerous consequences to the peace and prosperity of the churches, I have a duty in presenting the question for their consideration altogether apart from any private or personal considerations. Considering how large a share of the laws of the Congregational churches is made up of usages and precedents, I have a most solemn and weighty responsibility to my brethren in office, to the churches at large, and to the cause and interests of christianity, not to allow this first application of so dangerous a principle to pass into a precedent, to be quoted and referred to hereafter to justify its future application to others in the same office. Whatever may be the decision of the churches, or whether they consider or decide upon it all, I shall have done my duty in this behalf, when I have presented the question to their consideration in the proper form.

The cause and interests of religion are to be effected by this unfortunate controversy. I have not borne my part of it without a deep and painful feeling of apprehension of my personal responsibility in this regard. But I cannot persuade myself that religion or the churches of our particular persuasion have any thing to gain by smothering such proceedings as are exposed in this letter. Neither can I believe that the cause or interest of religion, as I have learned it from its source, can require any disciple, however humble, to submit to self-immolation, to spare the exposure of any other disciple or teacher however exalted. My reputation and prospects in life are as dear and important to me and the relatives and friends with whose confidence and affection I am blessed, as those of any other man. And I never shall see them blighted and utterly destroyed by any man, or any body of men, while I have power in any fair and honorable way, to defend them. I appeal to the community, into whose presence, I have been obliged at last to come, to give my defence a candid examination. I invoke a kind and charitable reception of my effort; and if any find in it ought of bitterness or resentment, I assure them I have endeavored to suppress all such feelings, however strong the provocation to indulge them. If I have not been as completely and entirely successful as I hope; I trust the situation in which I have been placed and the extraordinary circumstances attending the previous stages of the controversy will afford some apology for my unintentional violation of the restraint I have endeavored to impose upon myself.

As to you, Rev. Sir, to whom I have sustained so many, so endearing, and so important relations, no language can describe or measure the deep and lasting regret, with which I have felt myself compelled to take this course. I sincerely believe you



have done me great, uncalled for, and wholly unnecessary injury. But I hope you have done it with motives and purposes, which will aid you in the justification of your course, before other and more searching tribunals, than my mind, or any into whose presence it is in my power to bring you. If you can justify your course to others, you will have no difficulty in justifying it to me. But let me beseech you, should you ever think of making a reply to this letter, or of explaining or justifying your course to the community or the churches to meet my statement of facts fairly and plainly. Do not attempt to meet facts proved or offered to be proved with equivocal and general denials, as you have done hitherto. Meet and answer the main points of my argument, and not busy yourself with little things of no consequence to the issues joined with you in this communication. The scrutinizing eyes of the community are upon you now, and considering the high and exalted sphere in which you have moved, they have a deep interest in your justification, far above any interest or sympathy they can feel for me. But let me assure you this community will expect something, from so exalted a source, more dignified, thorough, and satisfactory, than any thing you have yet brought into the controversy. Whatever may be your future course in this controversy, I shall endeavour to bear my part with a becoming firmness and constancy of purpose, always remembering for my consolation and support, however dear and highly cherished are the favourable regards of my brethren and fellow men, it is a small matter after all to be judged by men's judgment, compared with our other and higher responsibilities. If I have done you any injustice in any part of this letter, if it could be pointed out to me, besides making you every atonement in my power, publicly as well as privately, it would be a subject of more deep and poignant remorse to me than any thing that has yet occurred in the history of this controversy. I cannot take my leave of you without repeating the assurance of my deep regret at the course you have taken, and particularly in obliging me to appear, with you at such fearful odds against me, before the public. What estimate the public may form of my defence, I have no means of judging beforehand. But of this, I think I am certain, they must perceive that my situation was such as called for all the power, which could be supposed to exist in a much more able and experienced man, than your long suffering and greatly injured brother,

JAMES G. CARTER.

Lancaster, April 1, 1833.







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